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2002: The Year in Review
The Boston Society of Architects' review of the people and places that influenced design in the year 2002

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Letter from the editor

In the three years that *ArchitectureBoston* has produced its annual "Year in Review," I have come to anticipate this issue! with a combination of curiosity and dread. Dread, because of the countless opportunities for errors in assembling such a vast collection of award-winning projects. And curiosity, because such a collection can also serve as an oracle, revealing trends and patterns that tell us something about the future of the profession.

So what does this 120-page quivering gizzard have to say this year? More than you might imagine....

We are seeing an emergence of a new architectural vocabulary, one that allows materials and craft to generate new design expression that traverses and occasionally transcends stylistic revivals. The results include new buildings on New England's Georgian campuses that offer fresh and sophisticated interpretations of the tried-and-true. But they also include projects such as the Multi-Faith Spiritual Center by Office dA — the 2002 Harleston Parker Medal winner — which venture into new territory. These are projects that are modern but not Modern; they avoid the now-conventional strategy of trying to look new by making nostalgic reference to what used to be new.

The urge to seek authenticity through materials and craft springs from many sources, many of which are entertainingly documented in David Brook's *Bobos In Paradise*, a socio-economic look at the bohemian-bourgeois culture that defines the new upper-class. But architects are also continually at war with a past of their own making. Who today expresses anything but contempt for the Postmodern excesses of the 1980s? Whatever its roots in literary criticism, Postmodernism in architecture finds the perfect synonym in "faux" — fake expressed with a touch of ironic pretension. Small wonder that when our tolerance for pastiche was finally exhausted and the booming late-'90s economy created a taste for the extravagant, some architects happily turned their backs on historicism, instead finding inspiration in rich palettes of sumptuous materials.

Unfortunately, current economic conditions do not bode well for the New Authenticity. Its practitioners face three choices: pursue a similar design integrity that relies less on exotic materials and skilled craftsmanship and more on inventive uses of common materials and construction methods; limit their client base to the very wealthy; or turn to the rapidly expanding availability of ersatz materials — synthetic roofing slate, stone, wood, and metal. These materials are marvels of engineering that have their uses, but the temptation to turn the New Authenticity into a "look" looms large. Let's hope integrity wins.

Are award juries getting grouchier? Is Richard Fitzgerald, the BSA's award-program impresario, not feeding them enough? In an apparent break from the genteel tradition of polite commentary, several juries this year were forthrightly critical — of trends they observed, of the body of work, of the nature of the submission presentations. (It is perhaps no coincidence that several of those juries included representatives of the client world.) Those comments are reprinted here in full in the hope that they provoke healthy discussion — and also in the hope that future juries display similar feistiness when appropriate. Fawning, even blandness, might gladden a marketer's heart, but objective criticism will ultimately strengthen the utility and prestige of design awards.

This issue also reflects the coming-of-age of many young firms formed in the last decade. The giveaway? Weird typography. A publication named *ArchitectureBoston*, which features what our art director tells us is an "intercap," obviously has a lenient attitude about names incorporating creative typography, but this trend is a copyeditor's nightmare. Don't be fooled by the cleverness of well-established firms, which are well-established precisely because they are quick to pick up on new ideas. Graybeards that have discovered the goatee, they've figured out how to get with the program by tossing a bit of peculiar punctuation into the letterhead mix. The real giveaway is a combination of punctuation, numerals, and arbitrarily capitalized letters that can do double duty as unhackable computer passwords. They reflect an insouciant attitude about computers and the aspirations of firms that occupy studios rather than offices. Someday these firms, too, will be well-established and struggling to modify their period-piece identities. The profession has seen other attempts to invent itself through its public persona, from the days of three-piece suits and law-firm-like letterhead, to the elbow-patched tweed jackets found in firms with names about collaboration, partnership, or groups. These young firms are already influencing the profession in important ways. But don't even try to find their phone numbers through directory assistance.

The last page of this issue, as in past years, looks at the Harleston Parker Medal winner of 25 years ago. The featured project this year is Quincy Market at Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace, the creation of Ben Thompson. Ben died on August 17, leaving a remarkable legacy that literally changed the course of urban history by igniting a great urban renaissance. Many people learned many things from Ben. Though he was extraordinarily gifted in so many ways, even Ben's closest friends would not say that public speaking was one of them; he may have been the most right-brained person ever to walk the earth. And so it is especially poignant that one of the things I remember most about Ben was a public talk in which he spoke about the importance of joy — joy in buildings, in cities, in life itself. Too many of our new buildings and public spaces today are joyless; sadder still to know that some of them are created joylessly. Ben's signature colors, banners, and Marimekko fabrics may fall in and out of fashion, but his message is timeless. Let us long remember a remarkable architect whose work itself was an ode to joy.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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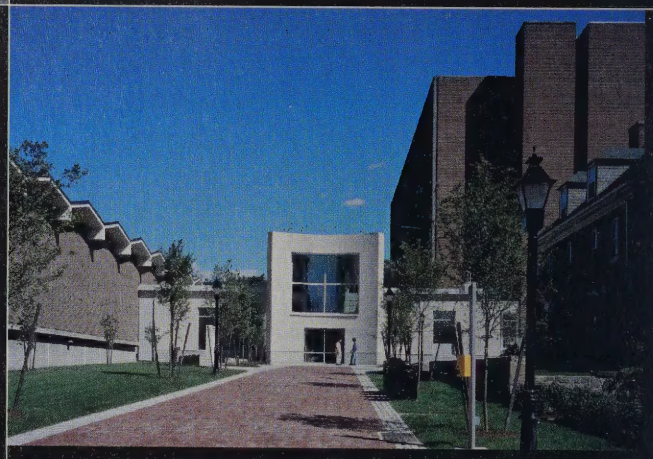

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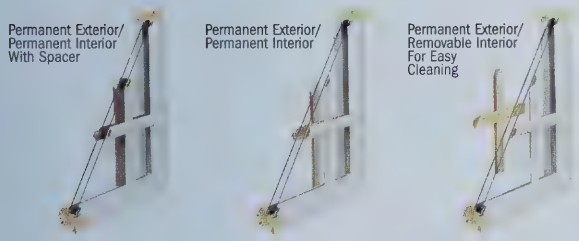

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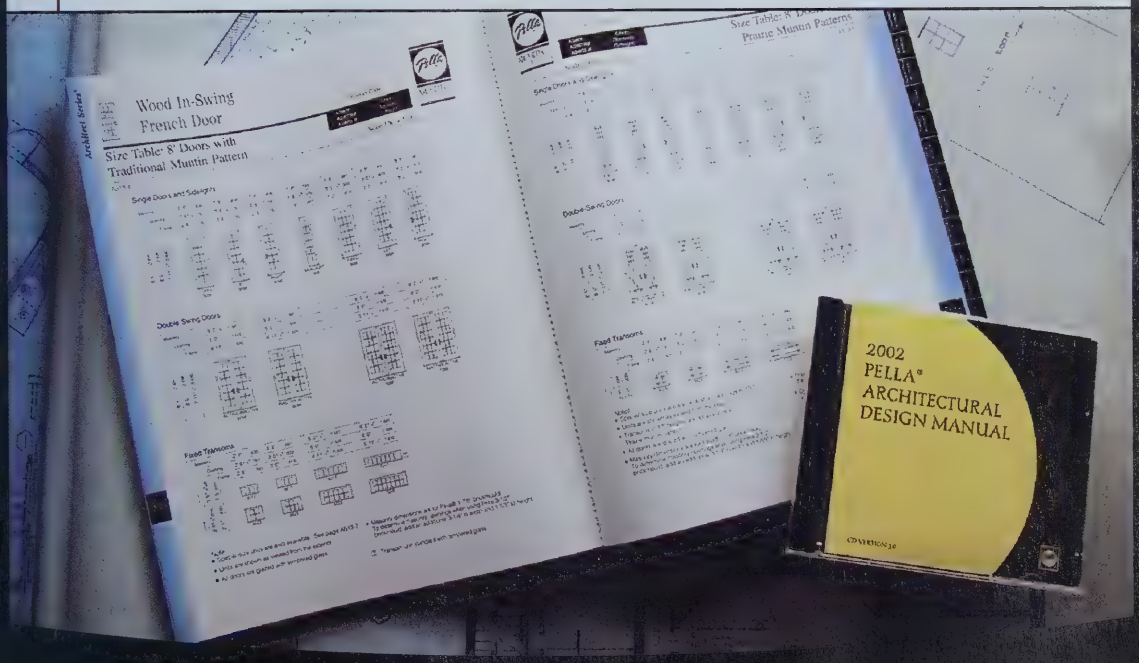

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Architecture 2002

By Thomas M. Keane Jr.

Simmons Hall at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts by Steven Holl in collaboration with Perry Dean Rogers|Partners Architects

photo © Andy Ryan

Architects have always believed that good design matters. That's the central tenet of the profession, the dogma without which architects might just as well be engineers.

The surprise of 2002, however, is that so many others seem to be coming to that conclusion as well. In the past, tough times have meant that design gets sacrificed. So far, however, the slowed economy has been kind to architects. Few report the drop-off in business that occurred during the recession of the early 1990s.

The reasons for the change are many. Powerful and prominent institutions have played a role. The aftermath of 9/11 has caused many non-architects to reassess the meaning of buildings. And certain exceptionally powerful buildings have proved to be so affecting that they underscore the centrality of design to our everyday lives.

Three nationally prominent examples make the case.

■ ■ ■

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology several years ago decided to embark upon an ambitious remaking — or, in MIT's word, "evolution" — of its campus. Expected to cost over $1 billion, the school now has 13 major capital projects in the works, including dorms, new streetscapes, athletic centers, and classrooms. What is remarkable about MIT's effort, however, has been its aggressive attempt to reach out to the world's best architects, asking them — in fact, challenging them — to create avant-garde buildings.

The list of MIT's chosen architects reads like a *Who's Who* and includes luminaries such as Frank Gehry (Pritzker Prize winner and designer of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao), Steven Holl (named in 2002 by *Time* magazine as the "best American architect"), and Kevin Roche (another Pritzker winner and designer of much-lauded additions to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art). Two of the buildings opened this year; others are in planning or under construction. None is ordinary.

Certainly that is true of Holl's spectacular Simmons Hall (facing page), a provocative 10-story dormitory. A latticework of steel and bright colors (when seen from the side), it's light, airy, and busy. Various off-kilter doo-dads dot its exterior. While still in design, *Progressive Architecture* swooned over it. It gives others a headache. (In any event, one suspects much of the effect will be lost on the students who will live there; to them, good design is the clever carry-handles on a Budweiser 12-pack.)

Down the street from Simmons Hall, the Zesiger Sport and Fitness Center is shoehorned among other, older buildings. Designed by Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates, it is breathtaking but nowhere near as shocking as Simmons Hall. The sheath of glass wraps the building, exposing fitness buffs within to the outside world. At night in particular, it is an ogler's paradise.

Whether one likes these buildings or not, MIT's bold foray into the dramatic is having an impact, not just on architects, but also on the school itself. Through design, MIT is vigorously asserting that it is one of America's pre-eminent universities. Its grounds will eventually look like no one else's. If even a student bedroom is cutting edge, it is saying, imagine what the education must be like.

■ ■ ■

Two hundred miles south, architecture is wrestling with a very different problem: the reconciliation of tragedy and commerce.

The destruction of the World Trade Center speaks in many, often contradictory, ways. It was a national tragedy, a time of heroism, a horror show of falling bodies and collapsing steel. The towers, completed in 1973, had over time become emblematic of New York and of America's economy — which is exactly why they became a terrorist target. The World Trade Center also served many eminently practical purposes: it contained over 11 million square-feet of rentable space; it functioned as a transportation hub; and it was the key to the development of lower Manhattan.

After 9/11, seemingly everyone had some idea of what should be done with the destroyed site. The Web is filled with proposals, some quite serious, others half baked. (My favorite, at www.wtc2002.com, dismisses safety concerns for its suggested 1,750-foot building — the world's tallest — by including a sound-wave generator that "has the capacity at a specific frequency to repel flying objects up to a five-mile circumference.")

design: Turning House Enterprises, Inc., The Bahamas

Proposal for World Trade Center by Turning House Enterprises, featuring a sound-wave generator to repel flying objects.

Local media, including *The New York Times* and *New York* magazine, ran their own ideas contests. Governor George Pataki created the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) and charged it with responsibility for coming up with a plan.

It hasn't been easy.

In mid-summer, the LMDC released six conceptual plans, all put together by New York architects Beyer Blinder Belle. The LMDC's intention was to solicit comments from the public, then narrow down the number of plans to three by the fall, and finally to chose a plan by the New Year.

That schedule fell apart quickly. Thousands of people commented on the plans; many were harshly critical. The LMDC backtracked and in October reached out to a much broader array of architects, engaging six different teams from around the world to come up with new plans. The hope is that three sets of plans will eventually be developed and then submitted to the public for yet another vetting.

No question, all of this is frustrating to the LMDC. Yet there is also something appealing in the fact that so many ordinary people actually care. The original towers, marvels of engineering, were hardly marvels of design. This time around, good design will matter. Human beings in many ways define themselves by their built environments; our buildings create the context of our lives — how we live, work, eat, play, and mourn. The tragedy of 9/11 drove that point home to many who had never thought of it before.

■ ■ ■

Fly to Los Angeles and, from the newly rebuilt airport, travel northwest 20 miles, through a burgeoning downtown to the edge of the central core. There, built beside the Hollywood Freeway, is the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

Officially dedicated September 2, Our Lady has contentious roots. Despite the protests of many, the city in 1996 condemned the old cathedral, St. Vibiana's, after a series of earthquakes. Cardinal Roger Mahony then launched a campaign to build a replacement; $195 million later, he got his wish.

Dubbed the "Rog' Mahal" by some who question its cost, Our Lady sits on 5½ acres. The sprawling complex is much more than a church; it is a sweeping home for ecclesiastical life. Designed by Spanish architect José Rafael Moneo (also a Pritzker winner), it includes residences for visiting priests, a large conference center with numerous function halls, an outdoor plaza, restaurants, a gift shop, and a mausoleum filled with 6,000 mostly unoccupied crypts. (Eerily, one of the crypts is embossed with Cardinal Mahoney's name. It shows his birth date but not, thankfully, his death date — the Church is powerful but not *that* powerful.)

Two elements of the cathedral are particularly striking. One has received much attention: the church itself. In a religion known for hierarchy, the interior is remarkably democratic. Seats are on a gentle slope that rises up around the altar, so that worshippers look directly at or even slightly down on the celebrant. The interior is suffused with light, much of it filtering through large alabaster windows. Everything is intentionally off center; there are virtually no right angles. With no obvious focal point, the eye is constantly distracted — an architectural comment, perhaps, that God is everywhere.

The second element, less remarked upon, is the Donor Wall, a partially covered space of contemplation built to the north side of the Plaza. The Wall runs parallel to the freeway. The always-congested roadway (this is LA, after all) posed a difficult challenge. The conventional response would have been to ignore it, somehow walling it off so as not to distract one from the otherwise serene gardens and fountains that dot the cathedral's plaza.

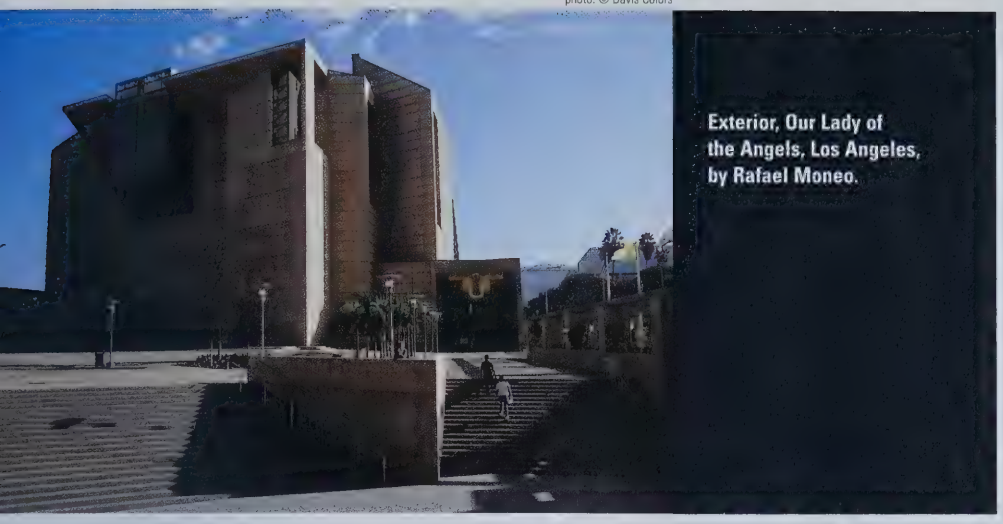
Not here. Instead, Moneo created a large glass wall, etched with the names of donors, that looks directly out over the freeway. The space is remarkably quiet — music piped in overhead can be heard clearly — yet one feels connected to the world outside. The juxtaposition is jarring yet thoughtful. Even as one reflects in solitude, the world rushes by, demanding attention.

There's much to like about the cathedral. Moneo has succeeded in redefining what sacred spaces mean; his path-breaking ideas will almost certainly influence the design of churches, temples, and other sacred places for years to come.

Yet while Our Lady may be an architectural triumph on its own terms, to those outside of its walls, it is far less successful. The open, airy, and magnificent interior is contradicted by a remote and forbidding exterior.

From the perspective of a driver on the freeway, the church looms overhead, the glass donor wall scarcely visible.

photo: © Davis Colors



Exterior, Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles, by Rafael Moneo.

Thomas M. Keane Jr. is a columnist for the *Boston Herald* and a general partner in Murphy & Partners, a venture capital firm. He is a member of the board of the Boston Society of Architects and of the editorial board of *ArchitectureBoston*.

And to passersby on surrounding streets it is solid and inaccessible. In many respects, Our Lady reminds one of the early versions of Boston's Prudential Center. Instead of reaching out to the community, it sits like an island, unconnected to the world outside. Surely this, in part, is the reason that so many Angelenos dislike it. St. Vibiana's was part of the neighborhood; Our Lady is not.

■ ■ ■

The Cathedral isn't the only new building with this kind of difficulty. Architects build for clients, yet their buildings must eventually co-exist within a larger world. Simmons Hall at MIT makes for marvelous sculpture, but seen from the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, as it juts over buildings along the shoreline, it is harsh, perhaps even ugly.

That tension — between serving the client and serving the outside world — is also what drives the ongoing debate in New York. The LMDC has its own priorities when it comes to the World Trade Center. The larger community, which includes many still grieving, still in shock, has different needs. But it's the LMDC that pays the bills of the architects it hires.

And that tension underlies many of this year's design debates in Boston. Boston's City Hall, still lauded for its groundbreaking Brutalism, is isolated, surrounded by a plaza of no apparent use. Years of redesign efforts have proved difficult, however, with every new proposal getting vetoed by one of the many groups with an interest in the space. The city erected a "community arcade" a year ago; it is much reviled. The state's public transportation authority plans to break ground on a replacement for the subway stop next summer. To its credit, the city is taking another stab at the plaza, putting together a new task force with members drawn from almost every conceivable interest group. Its chair vows to succeed, but admits that finding the money to build what it proposes will be problematic.

The Central Artery, soon to be taken down as part of the Big Dig, will leave a 200-foot wide ribbon of empty space running from one end of the city to the other. Here the open question is, who will decide what is to be done with this newfound acreage? Some want parks, others want dense development. The fear is that one wall — the elevated highway — will simply be replaced by different barriers that will fail to re-knit the diverse neighborhoods of the city.

And, also related to the Big Dig, is a brewing controversy over eight vent buildings needed to exhaust fumes from autos soon to be traveling its tunnels. One vent building at Logan Airport won the Harleston Parker award in 2000, making it ostensibly the "most beautiful building" of that year. But the others are getting little praise. Vent Building No. 5 in South Boston, for example, is an 18-story concrete box that looms over a residential neighborhood of duplexes and triplexes. And it happened without broad public awareness. "How can something that huge and importantly placed slip through?" asked Valerie Burns, a resident and president of the Boston Natural Areas Network. The vent buildings may be functional, but they often don't fit.

■ ■ ■

There's a common thread in all of these issues. In Cambridge, Boston, New York, and Los Angeles, architects find themselves serving competing masters: not only their clients, but also thousands, perhaps millions, of people they will never meet.

And that's probably a good thing. In the long-run, more public participation should result in improved planning which should mean that our built environment looks better and works better than it would otherwise. And the fact that the public has a greater interest in the built environment provides opportunities to rectify past mistakes. The maligned Prudential Center, for example, has been shedding its moat, reaching out first to Boylston Street and now to its south, to Huntington Avenue. No longer aloof, it now is increasingly inviting to those walking past. It's an instructive lesson. The Prudential, built during a time of urban fear, when few cared what happened to cities, is now being recreated during a time of urban renaissance.

On the other hand, the public's newfound interest in the built environment can make life more difficult for those who plan, design, and build. It slows down the process. It can make funding more difficult. And sometimes it creates pressure for design-by-committee, substituting the inoffensive for the brilliant.

But these are hardly points of despair. Conflicts, delays, cost pressures, unwanted advice are, after all, part of being an architect. But so, too, is the chance to remake cities, to improve lives, and sometimes even to create something of breathtaking beauty. ■ ■ ■

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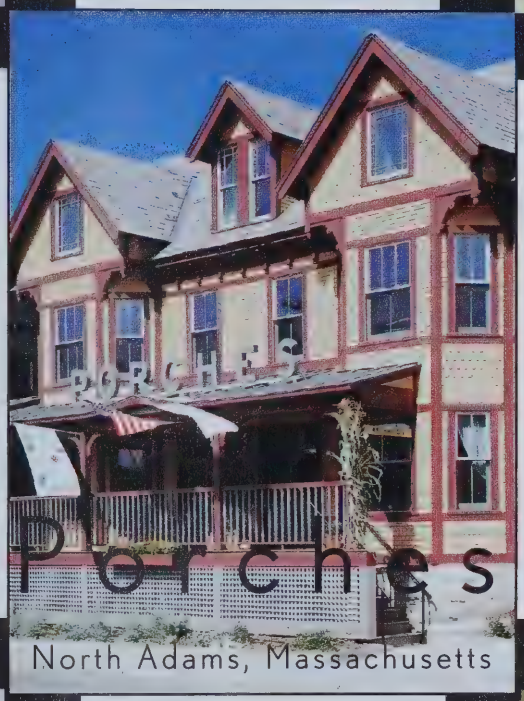

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Pop Friction

Rethinking Professional Awards Programs

by Edward Frenette AIA

Edward Frenette AIA is director of design and a principal of Symmes Maini & McKee Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is the co-chair of the BSA Design Committee.

Nowhere is the celebration of popular culture more public than at the numerous awards programs broadcast on TV. The year starts with the Golden Globes, ends with the Emmys, and has the Grammys, Oscars, and Tonys situated in-between. Those with greater cravings for evaluating pop culture can now satisfy their hunger by tuning to "Rank" every Monday night on E!, the Entertainment Channel, to watch the populace judge the popular.

On the other hand, professionals in nearly all disciplines are ambivalent about awards programs that attempt to evaluate their "elite" culture. Architects in public conversations are quick to distinguish design awards from the Oscars and align them instead with more serious fare, the Pulitzer at least. Fledgling lawyers make fun of their professors who show up more often within the pages of the Law Review than within classrooms, and the Nobel Prize aspirations of medical professors have become the running joke at Harvard Medical School. Indeed, architects, like lawyers and physicians, seldom publicly tout the awards they have received, preferring instead to show evidence of their public recognition in framed exhibits on their office walls or in their marketing brochures.

The schism between how design professionals and their public view awards programs is expressed by the contradictory actions of the Boston Society of Architects. When, in the '90s, the number of awards programs swelled from four to nine, the BSA's committees questioned each other about the excessive quantity of awards. In 2001, 41 honors were given in six categories, and yet another category was added in 2002. Amid continued expansion and questions about these programs, no voice has come forward to emphatically support or oppose how the BSA is proceeding.

To clear the air about BSA award programs, last year the BSA's Design Committee initiated an ongoing conversation on the topic. In March 2002, a discussion of the 41 award recipients in the previous year resulted in 12 projects being identified as representative of the body of work. Later in May, Robert Campbell FAIA (architecture critic for *The Boston Globe*), Wellington Reiter AIA (associate professor at MIT), and Sarah Whiting (assistant professor at Harvard) led a roundtable discussion on what they deduced from the 12 selections. Follow-up discussions were held with Tom Fisher FAIA (dean of the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, and former editor of *Progressive Architecture* magazine), Linda Mack (architectural critic for *The Minneapolis Tribune* and former editor at *Architecture Minnesota* magazine), Omar Akbar (director of the Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany), and Peter Madsen FAIA (managing director of Pembroke Real Estate and former principal at Graham Gund Architects). These conversations coalesced around five themes: the input, output, process, and effect of awards programs, and the myths they generate.

The myth of an anonymous creator traversed the discussion. Some of the group believe that a cadre of artisans are at work out of sight of awards juries and beyond the reach of publishers. The notion is that there is a body of work being anonymously created each year that is innovative but not novel, inspiring but not picturesque, iconic but not cliché — work that is, in some wholesome, unselfconscious, objective way, architecturally excellent. Mack countered that the architectural work that flows each year through awards programs does fairly represent "the best work being done." She supported her argument by adding that "virtually all the winners of the [AIA] 25-Year Award (a program

Friction

which solicits nominees from public and professionals alike) were recognized earlier in professional award programs." Locally, the vast majority of the winners of the Harleston Parker Medal, jointly sponsored by the Boston Society of Architects and the City of Boston, also received previous recognition. There seems little evidence that one will stumble on anonymous architectural genius in the North End or the North Woods.

Virtually all participants in the discussion called for more relevant input to the jury process. Campbell expressed concern that "the public often dislikes award-winning buildings like Boston City Hall and Peabody Terrace," believing that "we need to promote buildings that the public likes" through our award programs. He is equally emphatic about visiting a building before honoring it. Mack agreed, noting that "architecture can only be valued through direct personal experience." The Aga Kahn Award, Harleston Parker Medal, and *Business Week/Architectural Record* awards programs were cited as models of client input and site visitations. The call for enhanced criteria also included the need for information about the social, physical, financial, and scientific context within which the building was designed. Fisher stated that "awards programs need to find a way of incorporating serious architectural research about the myriad issues confronting architectural design," noting that three award programs (architecture, urban design, and research) were created during his tenure at *Progressive Architecture*. Based on Fisher's experience, specially focused programs are a good way of elevating important design issues through public debate and from there into the mainstream of architectural practice. Reiter captured the spirit of the debate when he asked, "Can you imagine how different the process of preparing a submission would be if you had to get a statement from the client — or from a neighbor?"

There was little disagreement on the potential of awards programs for professional development. Both Mack and Fisher believe that awards programs are one of the few avenues open to the profession for significant peer reviews. Most architects who have participated in juries will agree with Mack's observation that "you can actually see the jury become educated as they flip through the [awards] brochures." Design progress can be made by broadcasting the intense learning experience of the jury to the broader profession. Fisher recommended that the jury's comments be published and made widely available. "[Award] entries and jury comments are a great way to identify paradigm shifts," he noted.

Although there was agreement on the need for more public education about architectural issues, the value of awards programs for such purposes was questioned. Campbell articulated the group's disparate thoughts on the subject by saying, "the biggest problem the profession has is the disconnect between architectural culture and the primary culture." Akbar made this disconnect vivid by describing changes made by the public to the housing estates designed by the early Bauhaus faculty: "Connecting people and cultures through architecture remains the biggest challenge for modern architects." Mack questioned the utility of awards programs for communicating with the public, citing the relatively modest number of e-mails received following newspaper coverage of awards programs; but most agreed that awards programs have the potential of bringing important architectural issues to the public. Fisher argued that awards programs are virtually the only way for the public to discover new talent and firms. Whiting suggested that the BSA find a way to give awards to clients who care for buildings and promote a people's choice award.

Only critics Mack and Campbell expressed the conviction that awards programs have concrete architectural consequences. Campbell believes that photography separates buildings from context, and that award programs focus on buildings as objects. He sees novel buildings designed to stand apart from their normal context as the

Clearly the BSA has an obligation to the profession and its public to create the most challenging rules and in this way improve the "breed" of architectural practitioners.

unfortunate consequence of this focus. Mack countered that, because of the diversity of strong-minded juries, there is little chance that any one thing will be promoted. She agreed, however, on the seductive power of architectural photography. Architecture with a "story line" that can be illustrated through specialized photography wins awards, according to Mack. Do Campbell's "novel buildings" provide enough of a "story line" to satisfy Mack's architectural values? This is unclear.

■ ■ ■

On matters of values, the experts have spoken — but not with one voice. Consensus in the art of architecture, politics, or religion, is not to be expected. But architecture combines both history and science, and these factual realms might offer some evidence on how to proceed.

The performing arts are shaped by the quest for recognition. History shows, for example, that the length of songs changed from the 18th to the 20th century to ensure that they would be recorded and recognized in the most public forum of the time: radio. In the industrial arts, competition assisted by science "improves the breed" and the contest rules define the breed. Cycles, cars, and sailboats are literally shaped by the policies they compete under, just as thoroughbreds are bred for their competitiveness. Today, in a quest for recognition, we have seen visual, performing, and industrial artists go through Doric, Ionic and Corinthian-like phases in a short decade. The shape of recognized performers and winning competitors trickles down instantaneously to tuners on Revere Beach Parkway, sailors on Boston Harbor, and garage bands in Cambridge. Is there any doubt that architects emulate their more praised peers? To the degree that architects compete for recognition, the BSA's award programs shape the breed of architecture found in the region. Clearly the BSA has an obligation to the profession and its public to create the most challenging rules and in this way improve the "breed" of architectural practitioners.

But how?

First, begin by improving what already exists. Require that photos of the built and natural context that are now submitted be made more explicit. Call for descriptions of architectural innovations to show how architectural research is embodied in the submission. Include owners and users of buildings as members of awards juries. Record and transcribe jury discussions for distribution to all participants and the public. Immediately apply these simple changes to the requirements for all existing BSA award programs.

Next, add evaluations, jury visits, and public debates of all awards to annual programs. Evaluating the number and content of award programs regularly will keep them relevant to changing cultural values. Include visits to award candidates by a jury member or by proxy. Interviews by proxy are commonplace for college entrance, and site visits by proxy should present no great challenge to the BSA. Finally, celebrate the harmony (or dissonance) between public and professional values through both a "people's choice" award program and a public debate of the projects selected by the juries. The architectural profession only risks spirited criticism by opening its design values to public discussion. On the other hand, the cultural relevance of architecture is at risk if it does not.

Finally, determine the right balance between elitism and populism in awards programs. Design-award programs must be both. Architects need the self-confidence to act on their artistic agenda, but they also need the humility to take action in the best interest of the public. If we raise the requirements high enough to recognize only genius, then the majority of design professionals lose the personal challenge of the quest for design excellence. If we lower the standards to allow all awarded projects to be easily accepted by the public, then the profession abdicates its leadership responsibility.

Architects often turn cynical when they discuss the proliferation of design awards. They miss what should be the point of it all. As Peter Madsen — a developer and client — observes: "We like it when our buildings win awards. Awards produce better buildings for society." ■ ■ ■

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Urban Cowboy

Hubert Murray AIA talks with Charles Redmon FAIA

recipient, 2002 BSA Award of Honor

photo: © Cambridge Seven Associates

Murray: I once heard you say that what you liked about architecture was that it is a license to poke your nose into other people's business. Was that what inspired you to become an architect?

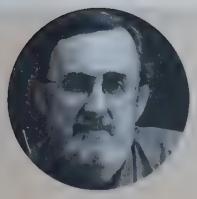
Redmon: No, but that's what I've found is one of the pleasures of being an architect. I get to meet and work with people of all different backgrounds and to learn what they're interested in. What inspired me to become an architect happened when I was ten. My grandfather was an architect. My father died of polio in 1952, and my grandfather became my hero. He was an architect who had lived through the Depression, with a decent-sized firm in Denver, Colorado. We lived in Houston, but we would go to Denver every year to visit him and spend a couple weeks. I got to rummage around in his basement through all his drawings and paintings — he was a beautiful illustrator. And he would tell me stories about what he had done. It sounded fascinating and exciting. Being an architect sounded like a good place to be.

Murray: Speaking as someone who's never been to Texas, I imagine that it was an enormous leap from Houston to Cambridge.

Redmon: Houston has vastness and no boundaries. I grew up just outside Houston in a classic suburban place — Elm Street in Bellaire, Texas. I could drive when I was 14. I had my own car when I was 15, which was crucial to my ability to navigate that place. Houston has many interesting things to offer, but it is a very narrow spectrum of what the great cities around the world offer. I visited Chicago and San Francisco when I was a student, and I was absolutely blown away with the kind of diversity and activity I found. Not to mention the value of being able to walk around — you don't walk around in Houston. But my leap from Houston to Cambridge occurred by way of South America. I had a fellowship with the Ford Foundation in community development after I graduated from Rice.

Murray: What year was that?

Redmon: This was in 1964 — pre-Allende. The State Department wasn't sure it wanted us to go during the elections, but we went anyway. We had a small studio of two American architects and two Chilean architects, led by a man named Paul Kennon, who had come from Saarinen's office. He went on to become the lead designer of Caudill Rowlett Scott and later a dean at Rice.



Charles Redmon FAIA is the recipient of the 2002 Boston Society of Architects Award of Honor, in recognition of his service to the profession. A principal in Cambridge Seven Associates (C7A) since 1970, he is a past president of the BSA and the 1985 recipient of the Edward C. Kemper Award, the AIA's highest national award for service to the profession. Prior to joining C7A in 1965, he spent a year in Chile on a Ford Foundation Fellowship studying community development. Since 1975, he has been an active member of AIA's Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team program (R/UDAT), and with it has provided planning and urban design advice to over 50 communities across the United States and Canada. His public service in the Boston area includes participation in numerous design charrettes and design advisory panels. His projects at C7A include transportation centers, aquariums, museums, shopping centers, office buildings, hotels, and university facilities and exceed $1 billion in construction value.

Hubert Murray AIA, RIBA, is the principal of Hubert Murray Architect + Planner in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His work has included projects in the United States, Britain, and East Africa. He has also taught architecture in London and Nairobi. He is a member of the *ArchitectureBoston* editorial board.

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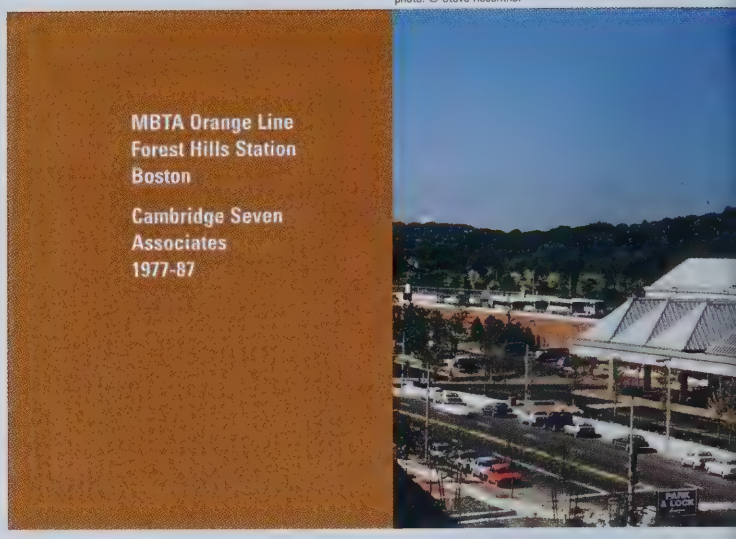

Murray: And what was the focus of your work? Where were you located?

Redmon: We were trying to explore what, beyond housing, made up the nature of different communities of different sizes. The Chileans were building fast to accommodate the migration of people from the farmlands into the city. We lived in Santiago — we worked for six months in the Public Works Ministry, and then we worked for six months in the Housing Ministry. The Public Works Ministry people came in at ten, left at noon, came back at four and left at seven, and smoked a lot. The Housing Ministry people came in at eight and left at five and worked a lot. For a young architect who had not had any idea about what constitutes community, it was an incredible laboratory experience.

Murray: The leap from Santiago to Cambridge is even more extreme.

Redmon: Yes. While I was in Santiago, I came across — and I still have it on my shelf — a 1964 *Architectural Forum* issue on "the New Boston." It shows these great photographs of Boston during the construction of the Artery and during urban renewal and talked about what Boston hoped to become. But it also had a curious presentation of a firm, a new firm of upstarts called Cambridge Seven. My wife and I had decided that the action was on the coasts, but we didn't have enough money to go to both coasts, so we chose the East Coast. I made the first exploratory trip and rode with a friend of mine in a little Piper Cub from Houston up to New York.

Murray: What a Texan thing to do.

Redmon: Yeah. It took three days. My good friend Bill Caudill, who was really one of my mentors, had given me introductions to all the great offices. But nobody in New York was hiring. So I got on the train to Boston. Boston, this great city I'd seen in magazines, but coming in through South Station, it looked awful. I said, I'm going to come here? But everyone was hiring in Boston.

Murray: Boston in the early '60s was still pretty grim.

Redmon: When I came here, City Hall was under construction. The Prudential tower was already here, but it and the Custom House tower and the old John Hancock building were the only high-rises in town. But the climate for work, energy, and change was extraordinary. I got seven job offers.

Murray: And why did you choose Cambridge Seven?

Redmon: Cambridge Seven was working in an area that none of the other firms seemed to be working in. TAC was doing schools and larger urban projects. Hugh Stubbins's office was doing interesting work. The Sert office was doing some great work, too. But Cambridge Seven had just received a commission for the MBTA [Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority]. The idea was that no one had done anything to improve transit systems from the standpoint of the patron or the rider. Cambridge Seven was a firm that was based upon a collaborative approach. There were in fact seven original principals, five in Boston, who were all architects as well as filmmakers, industrial designers, interior designers, and graphic designers, and two in New York, who were graphic designers. The idea of the firm was to integrate these design disciplines as a way of creating a total environment. I think that captured the imagination of the then general manager of the MBTA.

Murray: Behind every great architect you have to find the client who asks for something to be done in the first place. What was happening in the MBTA that they even posed the question to which Cambridge Seven could respond?

Redmon: I'm not sure, but I can tell you my perception. The MBTA was an old tattered system. The rest of Boston around it was changing, and it clearly needed some help to come into the modern age; our actual work program was called "the modernization program."

Murray: And Cambridge Seven showed them how.

Redmon: Yes, but without the general manager backing us and helping us, we would have never accomplished half of what we set out to do. For example, we proposed a new graphic identity program, which meant we had to convince everybody to change the names of stations and adopt a very simple presentation of the "T" logo. It also meant that we had to have the union of the sign painters learn how to do die-cut letters. We proposed separating the advertising from information signage, so we had to confront the advertising people who were making revenue for the T and tell them we wanted to move all their ads from here and put them over there.

Murray: It sounds as though this conversation might be valuable today.

Redmon: It could well be. What was interesting about the effort was that four of our five Boston partners worked on this project, each with a different area of focus. When I came to the firm in '65, I sat next to Steve Oles and Steve Rosenthal — who have since established amazing careers in architectural illustration and photography. The three of us, with partner Lou Bakanowsky, spent two years underground analyzing 40 subway stations. And so in two years in Boston, I could get anywhere in Boston by T. It was a disaster to try driving, which was a shock to my Texas roots.

Murray: It sounds like total immersion for a born-again public transportation addict.

Redmon: Exactly. And for someone who had driven all his life to learn how to design a system that carries more than one person at a time was fascinating. Looking back at that work, I think that was probably one of the more important things that this firm has accomplished, because we were able to connect the design of the T with the ways people learned, used, and understood their city. The concept of giving people a hint as to where they were in the city while they were underground was one of the guiding principles. Orientation was the key mandate.

Murray: This is in stark contrast to Harry Weese's approach to the transit system in Washington, DC. Every station looks absolutely the same; you have no idea where you are.

Redmon: You're right; the Washington system is the antithesis of support for orientation and place. Which is a tragedy, I think.

Murray: It's interesting that you mention this as your first experience with Cambridge Seven. My first experience as a visitor to this city in 1976 was seeing your slide show "Where's Boston?" which was about people and place. And yet it was using the techniques of Modernism in a multi-media presentation. It was beautifully designed — it was presented in that inflatable structure as a continuous show. I can see a connection between what you were trying to do on the T and what you were trying to do for the city in that exhibit.

Redmon: That was done for Boston 200 at the time of the Bicentennial. Kathy Kane was the advisor to Mayor Kevin White on culture and the arts, and she was given the assignment to prepare Boston for the onslaught of 15 million people who would come for the Bicentennial. Our assignment was to try to figure out, with very, very modest means, how we could help both insiders and outsiders experience and enjoy Boston. Kathy got Prudential Insurance to pay for it. For one piece of it, we created decals for participating shops that would say if the shop owner spoke Chinese or German or Russian. The idea was that everyone in Boston who had a business was a tour guide. And so, if you put that message out with simple graphic devices, you would encourage people to stick their head in a store and say, how do I get from here to there?

Murray: This type of thinking about people being the main resource in a city comes out of a certain generation of thinking. You come out of the Civil Rights era, and presumably that was the ruling ethos of progressive design thinking at the time.

photo © Cambridge Seven Associates

Chuck Redmon (second from left) at a public meeting about the future of the open space parcels created by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project.

Redmon: I think so. I am a creature of the '60s and '70s: Vietnam, the Civil Rights movement and, oddly enough, the Environmental Protection Act. Those three things put citizens in the game of determining and influencing the outcome of the cities and the places where they live. Civil Rights basically said there's got to be a change, and it was a groundswell. Vietnam was a similar kind of groundswell. What's interesting about both of those movements was that people came together to stop something and to change something. Then you fast-forward to the Southwest Corridor project in Boston, which replaced a proposed highway with a linear park system. Architects like Don Stull, David Lee, Harry Ellenzweig, and David Wallace created an incredibly rich and very effective citizen participation program. The citizens had come together before the project to stop the highway, but they didn't know how to get together to start something new.

Murray: One of the joys about architecture is that the test of our validity is whether we actually do something. In social situations like that, one often finds it's the architect who actually shows the way forward, because we're trained to make a positive intercession.

Redmon: Absolutely. We can forecast futures in a way that most ordinary people can't. We have the tools and the training to do that.

Murray: You have experience all over the country doing R/UDATs — the AIA's Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team programs. R/UDATs are based on public participation in planning and design, which is not without its own contradictions. What have you learned after working with that process for 25 years?

Redmon: The R/UDAT has some twists that are different from many of the public design charrettes that we've done here in Boston with the BSA. A R/UDAT team is interdisciplinary, which is very important. The team is volunteer, which is much more important. The team members agree not to pursue work for three years in the place they do a study. And the team insists upon open participation by all parties in the community — not that they need to agree on the outcome, but that they agree to participate. And once people begin to realize that the team members are not working for the mayor or for the developer, that they're really interested in improving life in cities and towns because they have done that elsewhere, that they're donating their time, you can get to the quick of the issues much faster. A R/UDAT will sometimes tell people things they don't want to hear, but that they need to address. And so it brings good news/bad news, in a sense. It is totally objective. It is the best professional effort. And when we talk to communities about doing a R/UDAT, we say it will be a very good mirror, reflecting what we've heard and learned about you in the four days of the intensive sessions and over the previous six months required to set it up, and it will reflect the views of these experts about what you could do about your situation. A R/UDAT can set the stage for future action and future solutions, but it won't solve the problem.

Murray: From both a political and a design point of view, the R/UDATs seem to be an extremely valuable process — especially at that early stage in planning. But public participation in design review is where all sorts of difficulties arise. And it's not clear to me that the quality of design in American cities has been improved with a much greater democratization of design review, despite some notable exceptions.

Redmon: I think that's true. Design review, in my view, happens at multiple levels. The difficulty is to figure out a way of promoting intelligent dialogue and to learn something from the community. At the same time, the challenge is to avoid lowering the level of the dialogue to everybody's consensus position — that's where you lose spirit and you lose vision. And that's in some ways how ordinariness comes about; it becomes the lowest common denominator.

Murray: Often the best way to avoid that trap is an inspired client who has the leadership necessary to embrace a vision and really lead it through the political and social hurdles.

Redmon: Absolutely. Because many people have to be addressed in any project.

Murray: How do you reconcile your social commitment — which, let's face it, demands a lot of time — with the business of running a practice? Is the time spent as a volunteer in public meetings and on R/UDATs lost time?

Redmon: It's both gained time and lost time. First of all, I have to say I have a wonderful wife, who has accepted the fact that I'm a polygamist. I've been married to her for nearly 40 years. I'm also married to the ideas that I think our profession can aspire to achieve. I'm married to my firm. I'm married to a number of different activities that take me away on weekends or for a week at a time. She's indulged all that. When I was managing partner in the firm for about 10 years, I worked 60- and 70-hour weeks. Initially the time away was sort of a problem, but I generally work fast, so I could keep up. The flip side is that after 25 years with the R/UDAT program, I probably know more architects and people in cities and towns around the country than almost anybody in Boston. And so, if a lead comes to our office from Dubuque or from Plano, Texas, I bet I can find out about it with two phone calls. So from a networking point of view, it has enriched our ability to learn about things that we may or may not want to pursue.

At the same time, working in different places with different people has made me a more agile and more relaxed participant in public environments. And I think the experience of some of these activities has rippled into my firm, because I haven't done this alone. Many of my partners have been involved, too. It's raised the importance of making a broader civic and public commitment. And there's been real payback — in terms of opportunities, knowledge, and developing an approach to our own work and our own projects. It's been quite valuable and not at all negative.

Murray: What about succeeding generations? Do you see that level of commitment being maintained by younger staff members?

Redmon: I do and I don't. As I said before, I'm a creature of the '60s and '70s with a '60s and '70s social passion and commitment. I think young people are doing the same thing, but they're expressing it and approaching it in a very different way. The ability to interconnect seamlessly and instantly through the Internet has opened the doors for a lot more dialogue — we can reach people of all ages, who might never go to a public meeting, about very important issues. It's hard to judge the current influence of the design schools. When you look at what kinds of projects the schools choose for studios as a measure of where the faculty and where the students think they should invest their time, you find some schools are doing critically needed work in the unheralded areas of our communities. Other schools are on the moon. But this country has a strong legacy of volunteerism, which is expressed in amazing ways. Different people volunteer to do totally different things with an incredible investment of time.

Murray: What do you see as the future for Cambridge Seven? You have been the New York Yankees of Modernism, certainly in our neck of the woods, for a whole generation now. And you have successfully changed squads from the founding generation to the second generation while adhering to the principles that you started with. How do you maintain that over the next generation?

Redmon: That's the classic question that every firm has to think about. Cambridge Seven embraces its Modernist heritage — the founding partners were with TAC, so we are part of the legacy that TAC has spawned around the community. Yet the ownership of the firm is

photo: © Steve Rosenthal

left:
Mullins Convocation Center
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts

Cambridge Seven Associates
1989-93

right:
Chuck Redmon rallying the
C7A river festival team along
the Charles River

totally new, if you count me as new — I wasn't a founder. Our hope is to continue the principles that we began the firm with — interdisciplinary, open-ended, collaborative thinking that follows Michelangelo's notion of sculpture: if it rolls down the hill and falls off, it shouldn't have been there. We shake off the things that aren't necessary in terms of the design. We would like to keep that kind of spirit alive. At the same time, what I have found very interesting is the changing dialogue and the search for purpose that has happened over the last 30 or 40 years in architecture in general. Different spirits rise and fall, and you can feel yourself tugged by them; maybe you play in that spirit for a while to decide whether it works or not.

Murray: Perhaps you'd apply that same 40-year perspective to what you've observed in the city of Boston.

Redmon: We're all still grappling with understanding what makes a city work. As others have noted, Boston is a place that has a hard time with innovation and invention. It's making great leaps in the South Boston area, which is an open landscape yet to be born. On the other hand, you don't want innovation for its own sake. You want innovation that is place-specific and that gives something back to the city of Boston. Architecture is being designed globally by superstars, what Bob Campbell calls the parachute architects. If you put your hand on any city skyline covering up to the fifth floor level, what's left all looks alike. That shouldn't be the case. Boston has made a great effort to not "be parachuted." But at the same time, it's a place where innovation and vision are needed. Alex Krieger did a book called *Past Futures*, where he chronicled the big ideas that came to the city. And what was really interesting was that many of them were actually realized 50 or 100 years later. The problem is that, with our instant response and instant technology, we want it tomorrow. It's not going to happen that way.

Murray: What Boston is good at is maintaining a fairly vibrant discussion.

Redmon: Yes. One of the things that I hope we all learn from the Big Dig project is that it takes 100 to 500 years to build a city, but it doesn't take 30 years to do one project. And if it does, the project's too big. I think the era of these mega-projects is going away. There aren't the resources to do them. There isn't the political capital to do them. Which means that we'll go back to incrementally making this place better.

Murray: The average cathedral gestation period was roughly 300 years.

Redmon: Exactly. But what was nice about the cathedral was that everyone had a vision of where they wanted to go. Sometimes people fell off, but they got back on. And this is the question for any community, and for Boston in particular. Where do we want to go? Boston is a fabulous city. If we could all relax about it and have some humor about it and enjoy it, it will continue to be a great city. I sometimes fear that we're over-wary about every little thing. It's sort of like teaching your children to ride a bike. They have to fall down a couple times before they learn. Boston has to fail a couple times to learn how to do things right. Since I've been here, there have been three Copley Squares. The city has enough integrity, enough heritage, and enough purpose that it's not going to go away. We're going to make mistakes, but life will go on. ■ ■ ■

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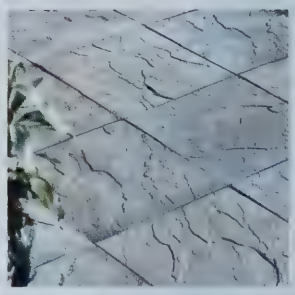

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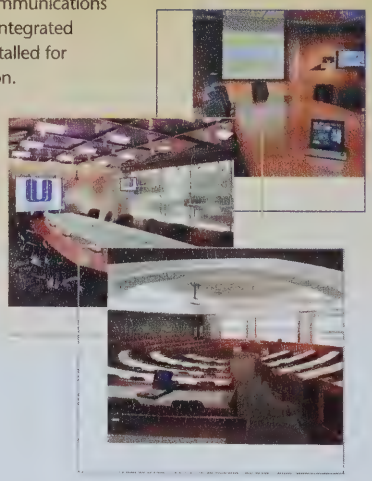

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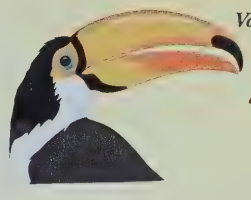

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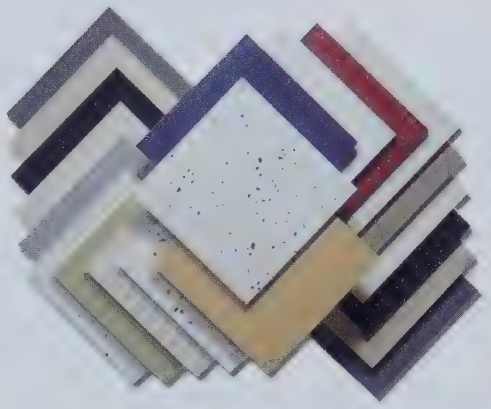

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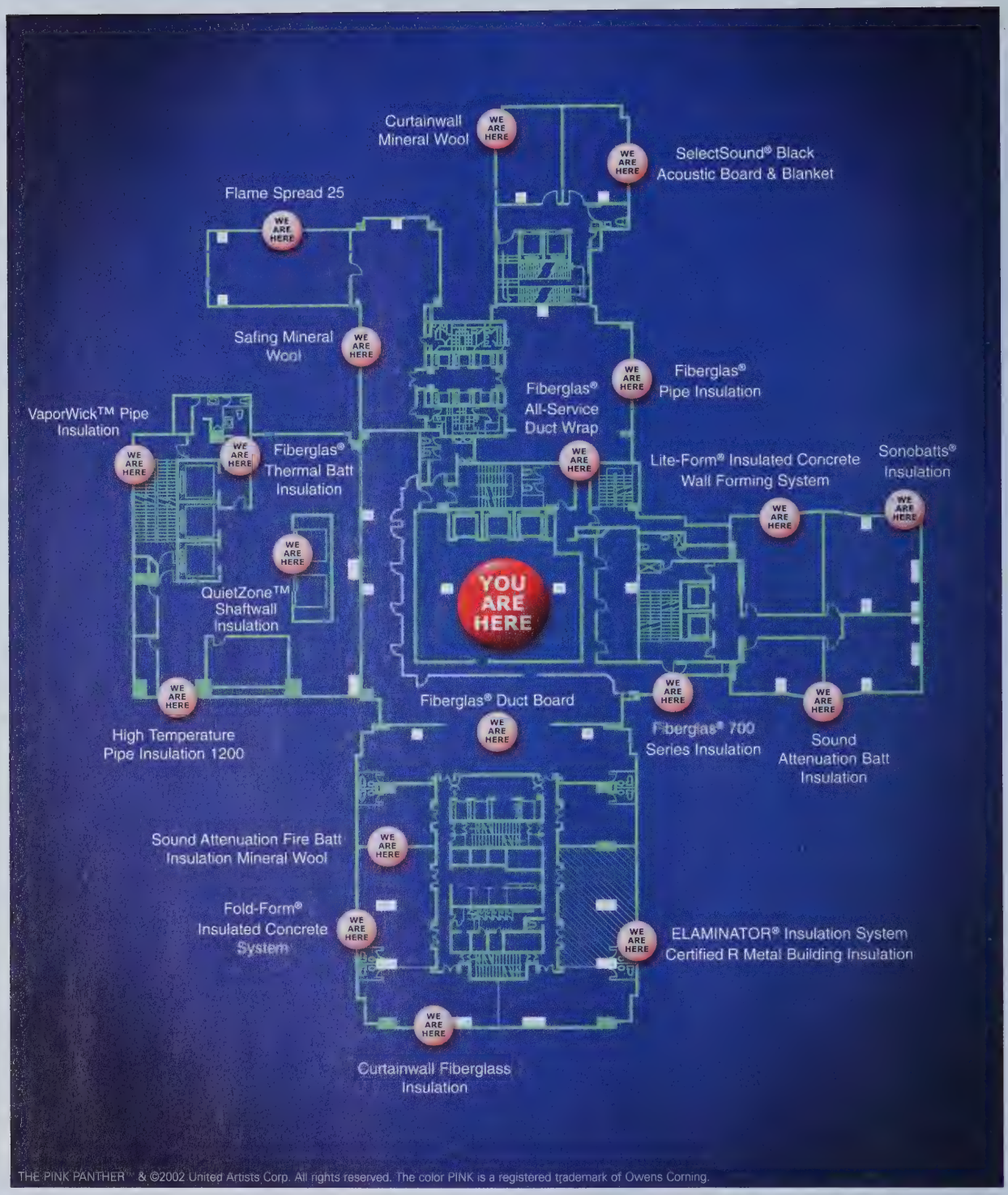

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Boston

Robert Brown, HDA, AIA
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares
Boston

John Carlson
TAMS Consultants
Boston

Jean Carter Cerreon AIA
Goody, Clancy & Associates
Boston

Bob Cunkelman, PE
MIT Department of Facilities
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Tim Love AIA
Machado and Silvetti
Boston

Judith Nitsch, PE
Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc.
Boston

Charlotte Golar Richie
Director, Department of Neighborhood Development
City of Boston

Andrew Wang AIA
Koetter, Kim & Associates
Boston

JURY COMMENTS

The experience of visiting the project was a spiritual one, and inspiring. The surprise is that this work is an interior place, fitted into an existing building on campus, without clues on the exterior of the building as to where to find it. Yet it surprises, and surprises again as it is experienced in different ways. It is a neutral space with a multitude of charged readings. It is simple and complex without complication. And it is quite beautiful. One juror pointed out perhaps its greatest strength as a work of architecture — that it is a truly universal space that could easily have really pleased no one, yet it pleases more than any had hoped possible. This is a notable achievement. The fact that the space serves some groups without recognized centers of worship — some rather marginalized faiths, in truth — was noted, and the timeliness of this interest should not pass without comment here. Awarding this project the 2002 Harleston Parker Medal is appropriate — it is the most beautiful project we visited, and it will remain a marvelous representative for future generations of the state of architecture today.

Editor's note:
The full text of jury comments, may be found at www.architecturebostonpc.com/h_m/plans

Multi-Faith Spiritual Center

Northeastern University Boston

Office dA, Inc.

The 2002 Harleston Parker Medal

Client:
Northeastern University Spiritual Life Center

Architect:
Office dA, Inc.
Boston
www.officeda.com

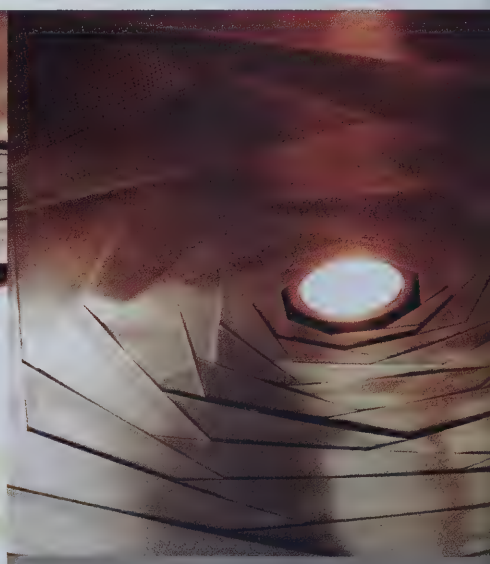
Architect of record:
SmartArchitecture
Cambridge, Massachusetts

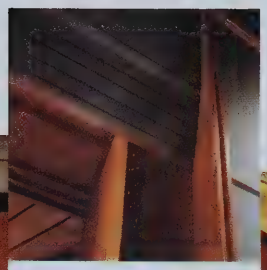
Project team:
Monica Ponce de Leon (principal); Nader Tehrani (principal); Richard Lee (project coordinator); Erik Egbertson; Ben Karty; Jill Porter; Jeffrey Asanza; Yeong La; Patricia Chen; Thamarit Suchart; David Kunzig; Dana Manoliu; Salvatore Rafone; Phillip Smith; Rusty Walker; Timothy Clark

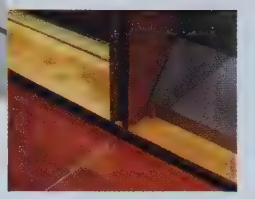
Contractor:
Lee Kennedy Company, Inc.

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Cosentini Associates LLP (MEP); Lam Partners, Inc. (lighting); Acentech, Inc. (acoustics); Brad Johnson (architectural consultant); Michael Perra, Inc.(woodworking); Garnet Construction Company, Inc. (woodworking); Native Sun (glass); M.D.N. Co. (framing, suspended domes); Office dA (metalwork, suspended domes); Milgo Bufkin (metalwork, ablution basin); Northeastern University Carpentry Shop: Jack Cipullo, Ken Booth, Dave Abati (furniture)

Photos: Dan Bibb







Michael Woodnick
Director, Spiritual Life
at Northeastern University

When I first brought my daughter in to see the Sacred Space — she was then in high school — I saw this look of awe on her face. She walked around without saying anything and finally said, "Dad, can I have this for my room? I'd really like to have a room like this at home." I think her comment reflects the need that all of us have for a place of refuge, a place that is peaceful and safe. The Sacred Space here at Northeastern is just that. One of my students, who discovered the space this year, said, "This has got to be the quietest and most peaceful place on campus. I wish I'd discovered it before I was a senior."

I consider myself quite fortunate to have the space across from my office — how often I go there for my own refuge, to capture a moment of peace and how often I get absorbed in the environment. I always return refreshed and quite often with a new perspective on a situation that I may have been having some difficulty with. Perhaps my daughter was right. I think we need a Sacred Space at home as well.

Jessica Ferwerda
Northeastern University Class of 2002

I love the Sacred Space! I could sit there for hours and hours looking at the walls and the ceiling. It's like you're in a totally different world. It's almost as if you were next to the ocean, under a blanket of stars. I feel so safe in there. It's as if all of my thoughts make sense and I can organize them. All of my muscles just relax and a sense of calmness comes over me. It's absolutely wonderful — I wish my apartment looked just like it. When you go in, it's almost as if you've taken a mini vacation because you don't feel like you're still on campus. It's amazing!

Beth Meltzer
Hillel Director and Jewish Chaplain
at Northeastern University

Over the past few years since the Sacred Space has been created, I have had several programs and services in the space. One of the most memorable times has to be an information session that Michael Woodnick and I led for the Orientation Leaders at Northeastern. The 40 students who had been going to endless training sessions throughout the week came into the Sacred Space and were in total awe when they looked around the room. We asked them all to take off their shoes and lie down on the many rugs that we scattered on the nice hardwood floor. Michael and I led them in a short guided meditation and then spent a few moments reflecting on that time. What I noticed is that the students who just moments before were very tense were now relaxed and peaceful. Some of the students mentioned that they were so glad to discover the Sacred Space so they could go there when they need a quiet place to meditate or just get away from their crazy academic life. Later that month, I noticed many freshmen coming out to our Spiritual Life table during Orientation and requesting to see the Sacred Space. They all said that their Orientation Leader couldn't stop talking about how beautiful the space was.

Joyce DeGreeff
Lutheran Chaplain
at Northeastern University

The Sacred Space provides an oasis from the rigors of college life where students, faculty, and staff can come to "take time out." In my five-year tenure at NU, I have observed time and time again how this space invites people to come as they are and to leave having been strengthened by the respite. Whether I am leading a service, enjoying a discussion with students, or taking time for my own personal meditation, I have found the Sacred Space to be one that instills a sense of calm and inspires us to live in hope.

As a Lutheran chaplain, I use the Sacred Space every Thursday evening for our Lutheran Campus Ministry programs in which students come together for worship, faith discussions, and fellowship. We especially appreciate the versatility of this space with its gentle balance between reverence and comfort. Last night, for example, we gathered on the floor with rugs and cushions for a candlelight service of readings, songs, and silence. At other times, we have used the more traditional altar-and-chairs formation for worship, which the Sacred Space can easily accommodate. And on less formal occasions, we have gathered in the softly lit room for conversations about faith and life, violence and peace, pain and joy. In all of these moments, I have felt so blessed to have this space on campus where we can find rest in a weary world and renewal for the journey. ■ ■ ■

Rotch Traveling Scholarship

FIRST PRIZE

SECOND PRIZE
Thomas Melville

ALTERNATE
Todd Thiel

Competition program author:
Tamara Roy AIA
Elkus/Manfredi Architects
Boston

JURY

Tamara Roy AIA, chair
Rotch Committee
Elkus/Manfredi Architects,Boston

Nathalie Beauvais
Harvard Planning and Real Estate
Cambridge, Massachusetts

B.K. Boley
ADD Inc, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Holly Clarke
Rotch Committee
2C Studio, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Steven Foote FAIA
Rotch Committee
Perry Dean Rogers|Partners Architects
Boston

Editor's note:
Editor's note: For more information about the Rotch Scholarship, including this year's winning solutions and the 2003 call for entries, go to www. www.rotchscholarship.org, or call Alexandra Lee at 617-951-1433 x225.

A Memorial for Boston

by Tamara Roy AIA

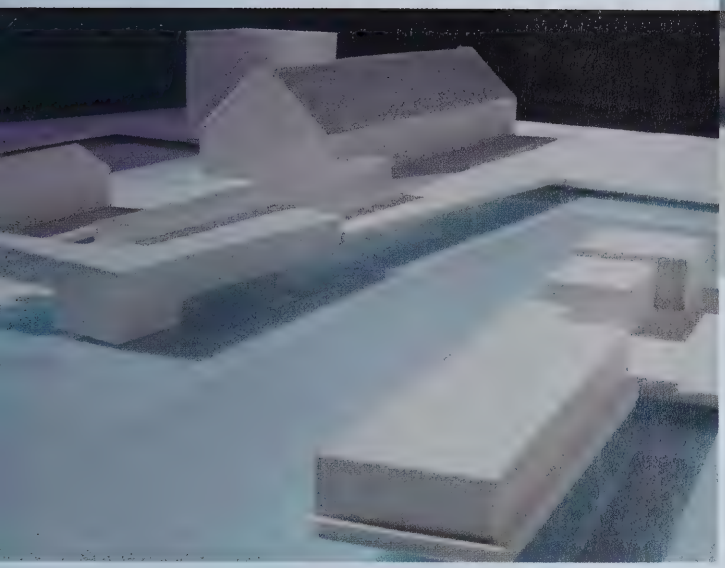
While most of the nation has been focused on New York's September 11th Memorial proposals, seven young designers competing to win the prestigious Rotch Traveling Scholarship worked day and night for 10 days last April to design "A Boston Memorial." The annual award gives talented designers the opportunity to travel the globe after winning a two-stage juried design competition. First-prize winners receive a $35,000 stipend; second-prize winners receive $15,000.

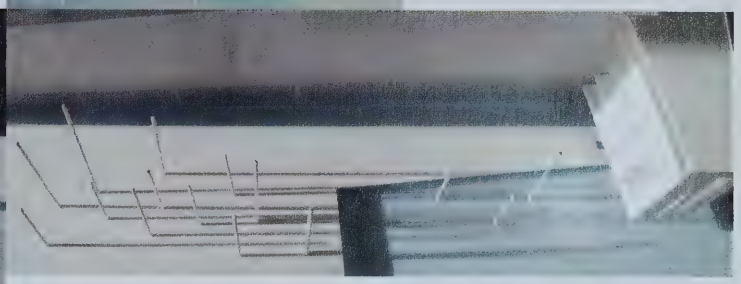
This year's theoretical program revealed a hidden need that cities such as Boston have for their own 9/11 memorials, even though they were not the target of the attacks. Emotionally affected by the devastation, many of us will not make the pilgrimage to New York or Washington. The objective of the Boston Memorial was to create "a physical place for the survivors, rescue workers, and all of us who have lost a portion of our innocence, to meet, reflect, and reconstruct ourselves based on a new set of realities."

For the purposes of this competition, the site chosen for the memorial was a very public one along the Boston waterfront with a view to the control tower of Logan Airport. While containing elements of traditional memorials such as spaces for remembering and mourning, the competition program also incorporated community functions such as a lecture hall and a young people's forum, to promote discussion of complex political and social issues.

Kari Silloway's winning entry creates a transition from the hustle of Boston to the hush of a place of contemplation.

Clockwise from left: northwest view of massing study; south elevation; and aerial view





View within the wall — the winning scheme

The winning scheme is simultaneously simple and complex: it is a wall. Unlike Maya Lin's now famous Vietnam Memorial wall, this wall — 12 feet thick, 30 feet high, and 150 feet long — can be occupied; you enter from the short dimension and then walk inside its length. Made almost entirely of translucent glass, it projects out over the harbor, turns 90 degrees in an L-shape, and loosely encloses an outdoor tidal area planted with thick sticks. From the outside it appears to be a large, scale-less element inscribed on the city. On the inside, the circulation space, purposely emptied of displays, is eerie and light. The destination is the reflection space — the outdoor tidal plaza — with views of both the city and the harbor. Wrapped in its diaphanous white silk/glass boundary, it succeeds in being protected but not enclosed, a condition to which many of us would like to return.

The designer of the winning project, Kari Silloway, has said that she wanted her memorial to fluctuate between specificity and universality, materiality and immateriality. When one considers what it would be like to go from the hustle of Boston to the "hush" of her interior, one is struck by the memory of the way our breath caught when we first heard about a plane crashing into the side of the World Trade Center. After all the playing and replaying of video to which we've been exposed, Silloway attempts a revolutionary idea — to give us back our own thoughts.

Finding our best ideas

As poetic and sensitive as Kari Silloway's project was, there were moments in each of the seven finalists' projects that shimmered with care and brilliance. Thomas Melville's second place scheme included a series of wide steps that led down to the water, onto which were inscribed the names of the victims. As he said to the jury, "I wanted to make a place where one could sit quietly with people lost." Isn't that what we are all after, in New York, Washington, and elsewhere? Other thought-provoking schemes were proposed by Todd Thiel (alternate prize winner), Scott Henderson, Elizabeth Kostojohn, Honor Merceret, and Edward Palushock.

Judging by the depth and breadth of this year's design work, this generation of young architects proves that it is not for lack of talent that much of today's architectural work is uninspired. Every year that I've been involved with the Rotch Scholarship I've seen fresh ideas and creative energy that could transform our cities if it were allowed to flourish into built work. If we could choose more of our buildings based on the competition process, then the best ideas could come to the surface, and all of us could feel the power that architecture has to affect our lives. Certainly the response of such talented designers to this year's program demonstrates how profound the sensitivity of architects can be, even as we all struggle with our conflicting emotions. ■ ■ ■

Tamara Roy AIA is a senior designer at Elkus/Manfredi Architects in Boston and a member of the Rotch Committee. The 1992 Rotch Scholarship second-prize winner, she is the author of this year's competition program.

BSA Honor Awards for Design Excellence

JURY

Alan Chimacoff AIA
The Hillier Group
Princeton, New Jersey

Ed Feiner FAIA
US Government Services Administration
Washington, DC

Janice Woodcock AICP, AIA
Woodcock Planning & Design
Philadelphia

JURY COMMENTS

...We were struck by the high level of competence of almost all of the work we had the opportunity to review. We were also reminded that Boston remains a fairly conservative center of design while building remarkably well on its rich history. The number of restoration, adaptive reuse, and rehabilitation projects that are being done extremely well reflects that sensibility. The work we saw was characterized in many instances by simple elegance, a very high level of craft, and generally quite sophisticated design work.

Editor's note:
The full text of jury comments, including responses to individual projects and the jury's recommendations on the preparation of submissions, may be found at www.architects.org/design_awards_programs

HONOR AWARDS

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Graham Gund Architects
Lois Foster Wing
The Rose Art Museum
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

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Koetter, Kim & Associates
80 Landsdowne Street
Parking Garage
Cambridge, Massachusetts

48

Machado and Silvetti Associates, Inc.
Boston Public Library
Allston Branch
Allston, Massachusetts

49

Charles Rose Architects, Inc.
(formerly Thompson and Rose Architects, Inc.)
Chilmark Residence
Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

50

Solomon+Bauer Architects, Inc.
Albany Institute of History and Art
Albany, New York

50

The Stubbins Associates, Inc. with Architects 61
New Office Building
United States Embassy
Singapore

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CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc.
Offices for CBT/
Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc.
Boston

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Kallmann McKinnell & Wood Architects, Inc.
Edward W. Brooke Courthouse
Boston

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Office dA, Inc. with Alexander Coogan Architect, Inc.
Upper Crust — renovation
Boston

53

Payette Associates, Inc.
Barus and Holley Building
Addition and Renovation
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island

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Bruner/Cott & Associates, Inc.
Bartlett Hall
University of Chicago
Chicago

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CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc.
Ecumenical Center
Framingham State College
Framingham, Massachusetts

55

Mark Hutker & Associates Architects, Inc.
Sengekontacket Pond House
Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

56

Kyu Sung Woo Architect, Inc.
Bennington College Houses
Bennington College
Bennington, Vermont

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Perry Dean Rogers|Partners Architects
John A. Barone Campus Center
Fairfield University
Fairfield, Connecticut

57

Maryann Thompson Architects
Outdoor Classroom
and Vine Trellises
Arnold Arboretum
Boston

Honor Award:
Lois Foster Wing
The Rose Art Museum
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

Client:
Brandeis University

Architect:
Graham Gund Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.grahamgund.com

Project team:
Graham Gund FAIA (principal); John Prokos AIA (principal); David Zenk (project manager); Carlos Ridruejo (architect)

Contractor:
Lee Kennedy Company, Inc.

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Devellis Associates, Inc. (civil); McPhail Associates (geotechnical); Shooshanian Engineering, Inc. (MEP); Solutions Engineering, Inc. (codes); Welch Associates, Inc. (land surveyor); Geller Associates (landscape architect); Kalin Associates (specifications); Jon Roll & Associates (graphics); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); Campbell McCabe Consulting (hardware); Lucas Stefura Interiors (interiors); Berg/Howland Associates (lighting)

The 8,800-square-foot gallery addition features a ventilated exterior wall system. Lightweight ceramic panels, articulated with aluminum trim, harmonize with limestone infill panels in the original 1960s museum. An acid-etched glass clerestory with mechanically adjustable louvers allows for full control of natural light within the gallery.

Photos: (left) Carlos Ridruejo Caridossa Architectural Photography, (below) Jonathan Hayes Esto

Honor Award:
80 Landsdowne Street Parking Garage
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Client:
Forest City Commercial Group

Architect:
Koetter, Kim & Associates
Boston
www.koetterkim.com

Contractor:
William A. Berry & Son, Inc.

Consultants:
Walker Parking Consultants; Cosentini Associates; SEA Consultants; Halvorson Design Partnership; McPhail Associates

As part of the masterplan for University Park at MIT, the design provides an urban solution to a large-scale parking structure. The elevator and stair lobbies are expressed externally as highly visible glazed towers which provide visual security and mark pedestrian entrances at key locations within the masterplan.

Photo: Eduard Hueber

Honor Award:
Boston Public Library, Allston Branch
Allston, Massachusetts

Client:
The Boston Public Library
City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

Architect:
Machado and Silvetti Associates, Inc.
Boston
www.machado-silvetti.com

Project team:
Jorge Silvetti, Assoc. AIA (principal in charge); Rodolfo Machado, Assoc. AIA (consulting principal); Timothy D. Love AIA (project director); Matthew T. Oudens AIA (project architect); Michael LeBlanc; Gregory G. Canaras

Contractor:
Peabody Construction Company, Inc.

Consultants:
Lim Associates, Inc. (structural); Richard Burck Associates, Inc. (landscape architect); Lam Partners, Inc. (lighting); Collective Wisdom (specifications); TMP Consulting Engineers, Inc. (MEP and fire protection)

The new Boston Public Library, Allston Branch, opened in June 2001. The 20,000-square-foot building houses three reading rooms, stacks and periodicals, public computer stations, community facilities, and three reading gardens. The library's material palette includes Norwegian slate panels, Vermont slate shingles, and unfinished wood cladding.

Photos: Michael Moran

Honor Award:
Chilmark Residence
Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

Architect:
Charles Rose Architects, Inc. (formerly Thompson and Rose Architects, Inc.)
Somerville, Massachusetts
www.charlesrosearchitects.com

Contractor:
Hodson/Steele, Inc.

Consultants:
Ocmulgee Associates, Inc. (structural); Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (landscape architect); Scofield, Barbini & Hoehn (survey and septic); Dynamic Windows (windows); Roger T. Sylva (masonry)

The main section of the three-piece structure combines living, dining, and kitchen space in a light, airy, modern room that is tempered by warm woods. Interior elliptical columns and large sliding doors and windows allow walls to disappear and occupants to connect to the wooded landscape and ocean beyond.

Photos: Chuck Choi

Honor Award:
Albany Institute of History and Art
Albany, New York

Client:
Albany Institute of History and Art

Architect:
Solomon+Bauer Architects, Inc.
Watertown, Massachusetts
www.solomonbauer.com

Contractor:
Sano-Rubin Construction Co.

Consultants:
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc. (landscape architect); Berg/Howland Associates, Inc. (lighting); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates, Inc. (acoustics); Ocmulgee Associates, Inc. (structural); Thompson Engineering Co. (electrical); MES Consulting PE PC (civil); Building Conservation Associates (preservation); Jon Roll & Associates, Inc. (graphics/signage); Nicholas Browse & Associates (AV); Exergen Corporation (HVAC); Robert W Sullivan, Inc. (plumbing and fire protection)

A new three-level entrance lobby/event space is the central focus of the completely renovated museum. Linking the three remaining historic landmark structures and a new collections storage vault, the lobby reveals the exposed walls of the existing buildings and provides a lively backdrop to the new front-yard sculpture garden.

Photos: Chuck Choi

Honor Award:
New Office Building
United States Embassy
Singapore

Client:
United States Department of State Overseas Building Operations

Architect:
The Stubbins Associates, Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.tsa-arch.com

Associate architect:
Architects 61
Singapore

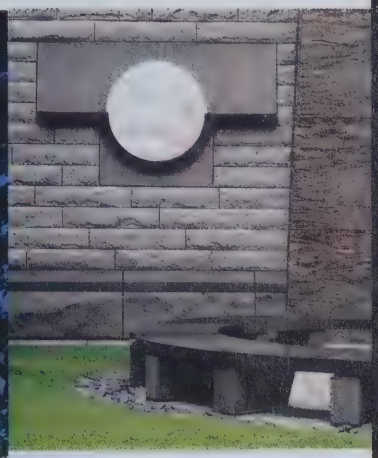
Contractor:
Dillingham Construction Company

Project team:
Richard Green FAIA (principal in charge); C. Ronald Ostberg AIA (principal in charge/ project designer); Joseph Diviney AIA (project director); James E. Beyer AIA (project architect); Russell Ames AIA; Chuck Cook; Cindy Davis, RA; Thomas Ellis, RA; Michael Giardina AIA; Ed Jenkins; Philip Seibert IIDA; Sarah Springer; Dan Thomas, RA; Richard Utt, RA

Consultants:
Weidlinger Associates, Inc. (structural/civil); Bylander Meinhart Partnership (associate structural/civil); Syska & Hennessy, Inc. (mechanical/electrical); J. Roger Preston (associate mechanical/ electrical); Electronic Systems Associates (security and communications); Haley & Aldrich, Inc. (geotechnical); D.G. Jones (U.S.), Inc. (cost)

The US Embassy in Singapore is designed to be a respectful guest and a gracious host. Its form is a blend of poetic, Eastern shapes and classical, Western orders. Its ambiance is created by the play of light on a reception pavilion and water in a serene courtyard.

Photos: Tim Griffith, Esto Photographics



Award:
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc. Offices
Boston

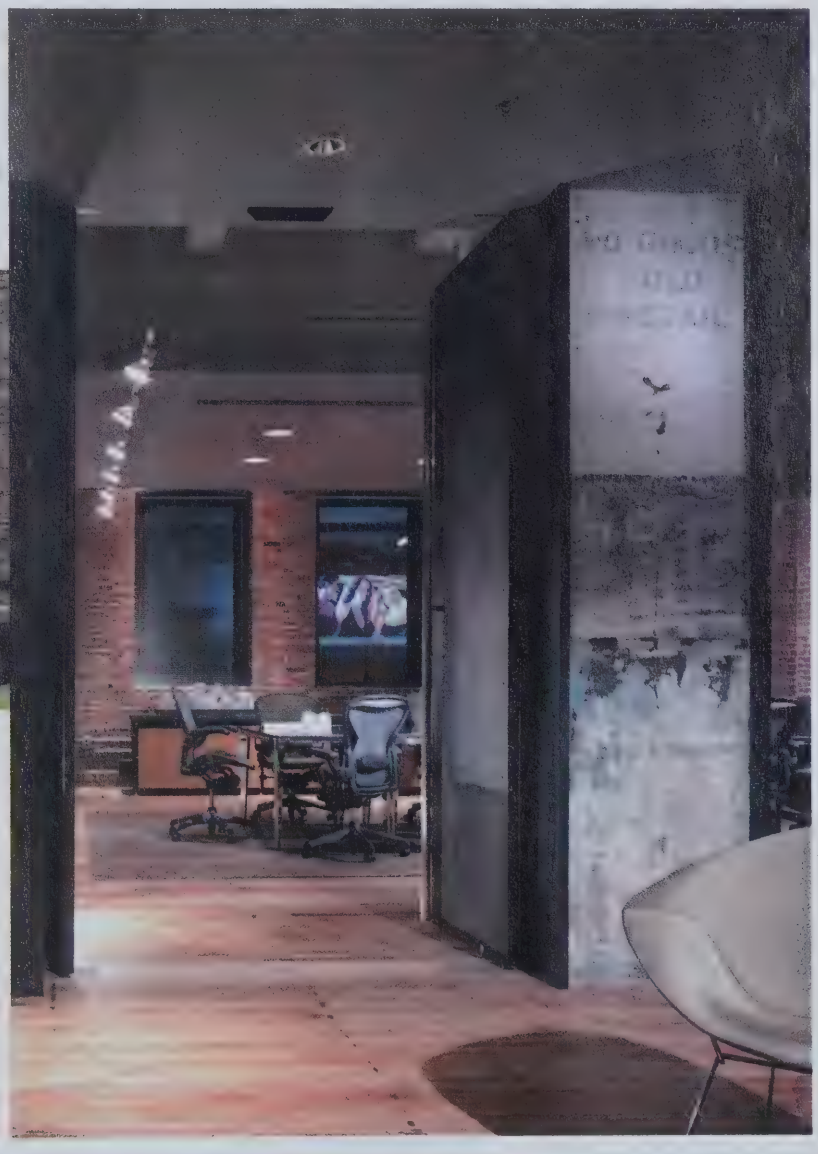
Architect:
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc.
Boston
www.cbtarchitects.com

Contractor:
AJ Martini General Contractors

Consultants:
Richard D. Kimball Company, Inc. (MEP); Schweppe Lighting Design, Inc. (lighting); Cavanaugh Tocci (acoustics)

The 38,000-square-foot office on four floors of an historic warehouse building creates a new image that better meets the needs of the firm. Conceived as an open loft environment, the design preserves existing historic elements of the building, while adding contemporary details that harmonize with the industrial character of the building.

Photo: Edward Jacoby Photography



Award:
Edward W. Brooke Courthouse
Boston

Client:
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management

Architect:
Kallmann McKinnell & Wood Architects, Inc.
Boston
www.kmwarch.com

Project team:
N. Michael McKinnell FAIA (principal); Gerhard Kallmann FAIA (principal); Henry Wood FAIA (principal); S. Fiske Crowell AIA (managing principal); Bruce A. Wood AIA (principal); Hans Huber AIA (principal); Kathryn MacKenzie, RA (associate principal); Anne Tansantisuk AIA (associate); Alicia Crothers, RA (associate); Pete Bacot, RA (associate); Don Eurich, RA (associate); Sara Harper, RA (architect)

Contractor:
Dimeo-O'Connor, a joint venture

Consultants:
Cosentini Associates (MEP); Weidlinger Associates (structural); Bryant Associates (civil); Berg/Howland Associates (lighting)

The Brooke Courthouse completes the unfinished State Services complex on a triangular site with a stone-clad building that declares its civic purpose with a dramatic colonnade, classical portico, and grandly proportioned courtroom windows. The courts and court offices open onto a central sky-lit public space which provides for orientation, access, and ceremony.

Photo: Steve Rosenthal

Award:
Upper Crust — renovation
Boston

Client:
Jordan Tobins

Architect:
Office dA, Inc.
Boston
www.officeda.com

Architect of record:
Alexander Coogan Architect, Inc.

Project team:
Monica Ponce de Leon (principal); Nader Tehrani (principal); Hamad Al- Sultan (project coordinator); Albert Garcia AIA; Kristen Giannattasio; Achille Rossini

Contractor:
Vullnet Miraka; Office dA

Consultants:
Kitchen Ventilation Specialists (mechanical); Crocker Electric (electrical); Peter Coxe (lighting); Kitchen Ventilation Specialists (HVAC); Laser Services, Inc. (metal cutting); Office dA (metal bending/installation)

Upper Crust is designed as both a neighborhood pizza joint and a "culinary boutique." Cherry wood slats wrap down the wall as wainscoting, continue as flooring, ascend onto a communal table, and terminate as the chef's pounding board. A suspended ceiling wraps the existing HVAC and other equipment, creating a quilted canopy overhead.

Photos: John Horner

Award:
Barus and Holley Building Addition and Renovation
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island

Client:
Brown University

Architect:
Payette Associates, Inc.
Boston
www.payette.com

Project team:
James H. Collins Jr., AIA (design principal); Arlen Li AIA; Todd C. Sloane AIA; Chris E. Baylow AIA; Brian J. Carlic ASLA

Contractor:
George B.H. Macomber Company

Consultants:
SGH (structural); Vanderweil Engineers (MEP); Gordon R. Archibald Associates (civil); Paul B. Aldinger Associates (geotechnical); Acentech (AV/Acoustic); Vermeulens (cost)

In 1998, Brown University embarked on a mission to strengthen its engineering department by creating a multidisciplinary, state-of-the-art teaching and research laboratory. The addition creates a new identity and entrance for the existing 1960s complex, provides universal accessibility and terminates the university's formal cross-campus axis, Manning Walk.

Photos: Bruce Martin

Citation:
Bartlett Hall
University of Chicago
Chicago

Architect:
Bruner/Cott & Associates, Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.brunercott.com

Project team:
Lee Cott FAIA (executive principal); Robert Simmons AIA (project architect); Daniel Raih AIA (principal/design); Henry Moss AIA (principal/historic preservation); Erik Christensen (job captain); Nick Brooks; Maria Raber; Beatriz Gomez; Curt Seborowski

Contractor:
Pepper Construction Company

Consultants: Romano/Gatland (food service/kitchen); BR+A Consulting Engineers (MEP/fire protection); C.E. Anderson and Associates, Inc. (structural); Rubinos and Mesia (civil); The Rise Group (program manager); Aramark (food service operator)

Bartlett Hall was built in 1901 for the men's United States Olympic team. The Gothic building was transformed into a 550-seat student-dining center and collegiate hall for major events. A seamless two-story limestone addition, new mechanical systems, production kitchen, and three new elevators have prepared this building for a second century of service.

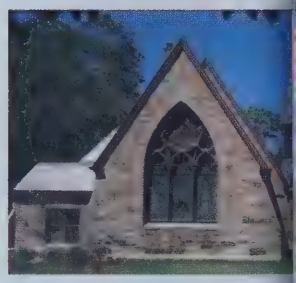
Photos: Peter Vanderwarker (interior); Hedrich Blessing (exterior)

Citation:
Ecumenical Center
Framingham State College
Framingham, Massachusetts

Architect:
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc.
Boston
www.cbtarchitects.com

Contractor:
Colantonio, Inc.

Consultants:
SAR Engineering, Inc. (MEP); Weidlinger Associates (structural); Samiotes Consultants (civil); Preservation Technology Associates (preservation); Raguin Associates (stained glass); John Copley & Associates (landscape architect)



The building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was transformed into a non-denominational Ecumenical Center for Framingham State College as a space for music, meetings, classes, lectures, and social gatherings. Although demolition was considered, the college recognized the building's history and opted for renovation and restoration.

Photos: Edward Jacoby Photography

Citation:
Sengekontacket Pond House
Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

Architect:
Mark Hutker & Associates Architects, Inc.
Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts
www.hutkerarchitects.com

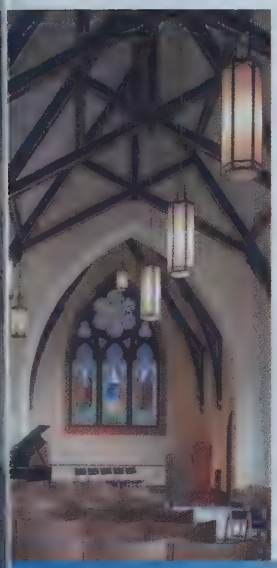
Project team:
Mark A. Hutker AIA; Phil Regan; Brian Stein; Carole Hunter

Contractor:
Cranston Timber Framing, Inc.

Consultants:
Horiuchi Solien Landscape Architects (landscape architect); Landscope (landscape contractor)

Sengekontacket Pond House is a low-profile structure at the edge of a saltwater pond on Martha's Vineyard. The home is able to withstand drastic climate swings and possesses a 200-degree view from the pond to the ocean, with a great view to the northeast.

Photos: Brian Vanden Brink



Citation:
Bennington College Houses
Bennington College
Bennington, Vermont

Client:
Bennington College

Architect:
Kyu Sung Woo Architect, Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.kswa.com

Contractor:
Barr & Barr, Inc.

Consultants:
James Crissman FAIA (owner's representative); Lim Consultants, Inc. (structural); C.A. Crowley Engineering, Inc. (MEP);; Reed/Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture (landscape architect); McPhail Associates, Inc. (geotechnical); Enman Engineering, P.C. (civil); A.M. Fogarty & Assoc., Inc. (cost); Sally Greene Permit Services (permits); Steven R. McHugh, Architect (specifications)

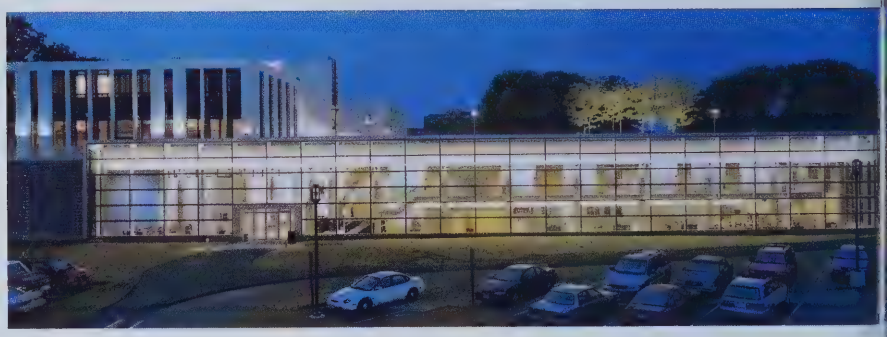
The new college houses for Bennington College form a permeable edge to the campus with a radial configuration creating a two-sided site condition. The foreground responds to the scale and use of the adjacent exterior spaces and campus, while the opposite end gives way to the open meadow and surrounding landscape.

Photos: Wayne N.T. Fuji'l

Citation:
John A. Barone
Campus Center
Fairfield University
Fairfield, Connecticut

Client:
Fairfield University

Architect:
Perry Dean Rogers|Partners Architects
Boston
www.perrydean.com



Project team:
Peter A. Ringenbach AIA (principal); Ned A. Collier AIA (project architect); Randolph J. Pease (project manager); Daniel G. Gallagher

Contractor:
Gilbane

Consultants:
BVH Engineers, Inc.; Acentech, Inc.; Origin Lighting Design; Rolf Jensen & Associates; Kalin Associates; Campbell-McCabe; Birchfield Foodsystems, Inc.

Citation:
Outdoor Classroom and Vine Trellises
Arnold Arboretum
Boston

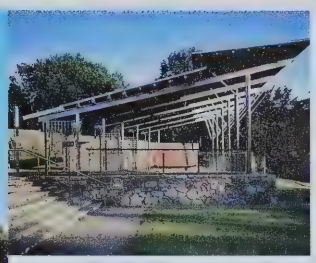
Architect:
Maryann Thompson Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.maryannthompson.com

Contractor:
Lee Kennedy Company Inc.

Consultants: Arup (structural); Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture (landscape architecture)

The south edge of the steel pavilion structure is lined with vine supports that will allow the sun to throw a dappled light onto the pavilion's stone floor. The column lines shift in plan and section, at once veiling the entrance to the pavilion and opening the space out toward the gardens.

Photos: Greg Halpern



The new Barone Campus Center is conceived as a plinth for the existing building, giving it a firm base. The solution opens the site to include campus center activities beyond the confines of the original structure. This new complex houses the student lounge, student organizations, meeting rooms, the central student mail facility, and a service dock.

Photos: Richard Mandelkorn

2002 K-12 Educational Facilities Design Awards

JURY

Khadijah Abdus-Sabur AIA
Boston Public Schools/
Planning and Engineering
Boston

Don Pierson
Dean, Graduate School
of Education, University of
Massachusetts/Lowell
Lowell, Massachusetts

John Rahill AIA
Black River Design
Montpelier, Vermont

Bella Wong
Assistant Superintendent
of Schools
Wellesley, Massachusetts

JURY COMMENTS

This year for the first time, the BSA administered a design awards program that focused specifically on educational facilities serving K-12 students....One of the challenges we faced as jurors was understanding projects that seemed challenging or complex but often lacked adequate explanatory information such as how a particular learning model might have driven design...While the 57 submissions included many handsome buildings, we found very little narrative that focused on educational theory and how that might have influenced the program and the design solution. One quirky discovery that we found troubling was the excessive emphasis on exterior facades often at the expense of adequate verbal and visual information on the design of interiors; indeed, several portfolios wholly lacked images of classrooms or other interior spaces....We were quite taken with the delightful and widespread experimentation with color in interior spaces and with the generally careful and competent work exhibited in almost every submission we had the opportunity to review.

Editor's note:
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59
The Architectural Team, Inc.
Gerald and Darlene Jordan
Boys & Girls Club
Chelsea, Massachusetts

60
Chan Krieger & Associates
Nicholas Athletic Center
Buckingham Browne and
Nichols School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

61
Flansburgh Associates, Inc.
Ipswich Middle/High School
Ipswich, Massachusetts

61
Graham Gund Architects with Van Dijk Westlake Reed Leskosky
Hathaway Brown School
Middle School Addition
Shaker Heights, Ohio

62
Harriman Associates Architects + Engineers
Noble High School
North Berwick, Maine
Auburn, Maine

64
HMFH Architects, Inc.
Maria L. Baldwin School
(formerly Agassiz School)
Cambridge, Massachusetts

63
Perry Dean Rogers I Partners Architects
The Dillon Arts Center
Groton School
Groton, Massachusetts

65
Symmes Maini & McKee Associates
Science and Technology Center
Noble and Greenough School
Dedham, Massachusetts

Award:
Gerald and Darlene Jordan Boys & Girls Club
Chelsea, Massachusetts

Client:
The Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston

Architect:
The Architectural Team, Inc.
Chelsea, Massachusetts
www.architecturalteam.com

Project team:
Robert J. Verrier AIA, NCARB (principal in charge); Mark Rosenshein (project manager); Susan Kossa (assistant project manager)

Contractor:
CWC Builders, Inc.

Consultants:
David M. Berg Associates, Inc. (structural); Sam Zax Associates (electrical); Ginns/Dubin Engineers (HVAC); Silva Engineering Associates, Inc. (civil); Geotechnical Consultants, Inc. (geotechnical); Cromwell Consulting, Inc. (kitchen); Phillip Porter (pool)

The Gerald and Darlene Jordan Boys & Girls Club features a computer/technology center; a gymnasium; a performing-arts center; a commercial kitchen; and extensive arts program space. Vibrant color schemes reflect the personality of each program area, and striking curved walls with recessed shapes accentuate a dynamic and youthful atmosphere.

Photos: Bruce T. Martin

Award:
Nicholas Athletic Center
Buckingham Browne and Nichols School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Architect:
Chan Krieger & Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.chankrieger.com

Project team:
Alex Krieger FAIA (design principal); Lawrence A. Chan AIA (design principal); Tom Sieniewicz AIA (project manager)

Contractor:
Richard White Sons

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Abbood/Holloran Associates, Inc. (MEP); Child Associates, Inc. (MEP); Samiotes Consultants, Inc. (civil); Berg/Howland Associates (lighting)

The Nicholas Athletic Center includes a 44,000-square-foot, two-level gymnasium housing basketball and volleyball courts, a state-of-the-art rowing tank, a wrestling room, dance studios, and a future running track. The 35,000-square-foot field house, built for seasonal ice hockey and tennis also incorporates a fitness room, meeting rooms, and classrooms.

Photos: Anton Grassl

Award:
Ipswich Middle/High School
Ipswich, Massachusetts

Client:
Ipswich Public Schools

Architect:
Flansburgh Associates, Inc.
Boston
www.fai-arch.com

Project team:
Earl R. Flansburgh FAIA (principal in charge); Sidney R. Bowen, III (project manager); Alan S. Ross AIA (project architect); Jay Williams AIA (construction administration)

Contractor:
Westcott Construction Corporation

Consultants:
Design Technique, Inc. (CM); Simpson, Gumpertz & Heger, Inc. (structural); Shooshanian Engineering, Inc. (MEP); Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc. (civil); Geller Associates, Inc. (landscape architect)

The design of the Ipswich Middle/High School replaces the usual "corridors and boxes" with six, eight-classroom clusters grouped around "kivas," where class groups can gather, meet, and learn in a very relaxed way.

Photos: Greg Premru

Award:
Middle School Addition
Hathaway Brown School
Shaker Heights, Ohio

Client:
Hathaway Brown School

Architect:
Graham Gund Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.grahamgund.com

Architect of Record:
Van Dijk Westlake Reed Leskosky

Contractor:
The A.M. Higley Company

Consultants:
Neff & Associates (civil); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); Lucas Stefura Interiors (interior); Earl Walls Associates (laboratory); CINI-Little International, Inc. (food service); Berg/Howland Associates (lighting); Jon Roll & Associates (graphics)

Photos
Jonathan Hillyer/Esto Photographics

The 61,000-square-foot building addition for an independent girls' school in Ohio houses classrooms, dining facilities, and multi-purpose meeting spaces. Distinct "neighborhood" meeting areas for each grade level include formal and informal learning spaces. The dramatic glass-enclosed Great Hall is now the hub of daily school life.

Award:
Noble High School
North Berwick, Maine

Client:
School Administrative District #60
North Berwick, Maine

Architect:
Harriman Associates
Auburn, Maine
www.harriman.com

Project team:
Rodney S. Boynton AIA (principal in charge); Daniel W. Cecil AIA (project architect); Jeffrey B. Larimer AIA (architect); Derek V. Smythe (architectural designer); Daniel E. Robbins (job captain); Andre J. Deshaies ASLA (landscape architect); Frank L. Crabtree PE (civil); Clifton W. Greim PE (mechanical); Philip R. Morrissette PE (electrical); B. Keith Brenner PE (structural); Kenneth E. Brann, CCS (specifications)

Contractor:
Harvey Construction

Consultants:
Colburn Guyette (kitchen); Accentech, Inc. (acoustic); CDA (educational technology)

Fifteen, 100-student "learning communities" fit Noble High School's project-based, interdisciplinary teaching methods and help make a 270,000-square-foot school feel small. With space for community programs like a childcare center and a health clinic, the school has become the hub of the three rural towns it serves.

Photos: James R. Salomon

Award:
The Dillon Arts Center
Groton School
Groton, Massachusetts

Architect:
Perry Dean Rogers|Partners Architects
Boston
www.perrydean.com

Project team:
Steven Foote FAIA (principal in charge); Jennifer Tucker (project manager); Nancy McDonald; Brent Stringfellow

Contractor:
KennRoss/Linbeck

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants; BVH Engineers, Inc.; Richard D. White; McPhail Associates; Daedalus Projects; Robert W. Sullivan; Samiotes Consultants, Inc.; Child Associates, Inc.; Jaffe Holden Scarbrough Acoustics, Inc.; Bouyea & Assoc.; Wassmann Audio Visual; Dames & Moore

The new building at the Groton School is a 13,100 square-foot visual-arts center with classrooms and exhibition space. The design accommodates the specific requirements for painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, and photography classes and incorporates the use of natural light for the creation and viewing of art.

Photos: Richard Mandell, [illegible]

Award:
Maria L. Baldwin School
(formerly Agassiz School)
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Client:
City of Cambridge

Architect:
HMFH Architects, Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.hmfh.com

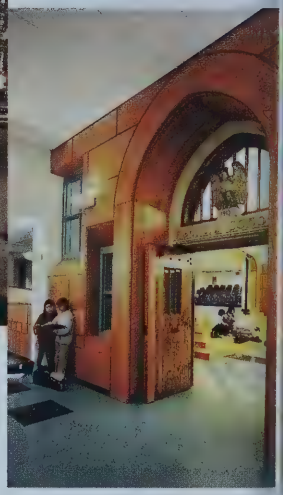
Project team:
George R. Metzger AIA (principal in charge); Steven L. Millington AIA (project manager); Mario J. Torroella AIA (design director); Robert Pahl AIA (project architect); Arthur Duffy AIA; Vassilios Valaes AIA; Cindy Stearns

Contractor:
Eastern Contractors, Inc.

Consultants:
Foley and Buhl Engineering, Inc. (structural); TMP Consulting Engineers, Inc. (MEP); Carol R. Johnson Associates, Inc. (landscape architect)

The Baldwin School triples the size of its 80-year-old predecessor, with community spaces tucked below ground and illuminated by street-level bays that also add residential scale. Salvaged stone doorways and woodwork from the old school provide a history lesson and generous window expanses connect students and the neighborhood.

Photos: Wayne Soverns, Jr



Award:
Science and Technology Center
Noble and Greenough School
Dedham, Massachusetts

Client:
Noble and Greenough School

Architect:
Symmes Maini & McKee Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.smma.com

Contractor:
Cutler Associates, Inc.

The Noble and Greenough Science and Technology Center is a classroom and laboratory facility for biology, chemistry, physics, and computer science that also houses a 125-seat multi-purpose auditorium. The building's main entry features the "science forum," which is highly visible from the academic quadrangle.

Photos:
Nick Wheeler/Wheeler Photographics

BSA/New England Healthcare Assembly Design Awards

JURY

David Hanitchak AIA
Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston

Joseph Kuspan AIA
Karlsberger Companies
Columbus, Ohio

Tim Marsters AIA
Marsters & Partners
Boston

Liz Thiebe
Baystate Medical Center
Springfield, Massachusetts

JURY COMMENTS

An unusual aspect of this year's submissions was the exceptional (and, unfortunately, probably not surprising) emphasis on design aesthetics rather than on design functionality in a project type that demands incredibly astute attention to functionality, operations, and client needs that are extraordinarily precise....

[The projects submitted did not represent] as impressive a collection of work as we would have expected from what is without doubt one of the centers (if not the center) of American healthcare facility design. The profession in New England is renowned for its work in the healthcare arena and, with few exceptions, that national prominence was not evident here....

As with any project type, unless those of us who are architects delve deeply into the early stages of the client's planning needs, program needs and complexities, long-term vision, and similar issues, the trend toward viewing architecture as a commodity can only accelerate. And unless we perceive design awards programs such as these as opportunities to demonstrate the integral role architects should be playing for clients along a full spectrum of client activities — not just building design — we are destined to continue to please each other with beautiful design that may be functionally or operationally inappropriate. The healthcare system in this nation is in the ICU and the architectural profession has a unique opportunity and a moral obligation to apply its problem-perceiving and problem-solving expertise not only to the aesthetic design of a building but also to the challenging needs of the healthcare community as a whole.

With all that in mind, we are pleased to identify five projects we think rise above the general level of competence in evidence in all the work we reviewed.... We are honoring these projects for many reasons but in most cases because of the sensitive planning evident in these projects.

Editor's note:
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AWARDS

67

MorrisSwitzer ~ Environments for Health, Inc.
Tampa Children's Hospital
St. Joseph's
Tampa, Florida

73

Taylor & Partners, Inc.
The Courtyard and Main Entrance
Newport Hospital
Newport, Rhode Island

HONORABLE MENTIONS

69

Cannon Design
Inpatient Pavilion
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Boston

70

Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott with The Hillier Group
Bristol-Myers Squibb
Children's Hospital
Robert Wood Johnson
University Hospital
New Brunswick, New Jersey

71

Tsoi/Kobus & Associates, Inc.
The Aaron Lazare Medical
Research Building
University of Massachusetts
Medical School
Worcester, Massachusetts

Award:
Tampa Children's Hospital at St. Joseph's
Tampa, Florida

Client:
St. Joseph's Hospital

Architect:
MorrisSwitzer ~ Environments for Health, Inc.
Williston, Vermont
www.morrisswitzer.com

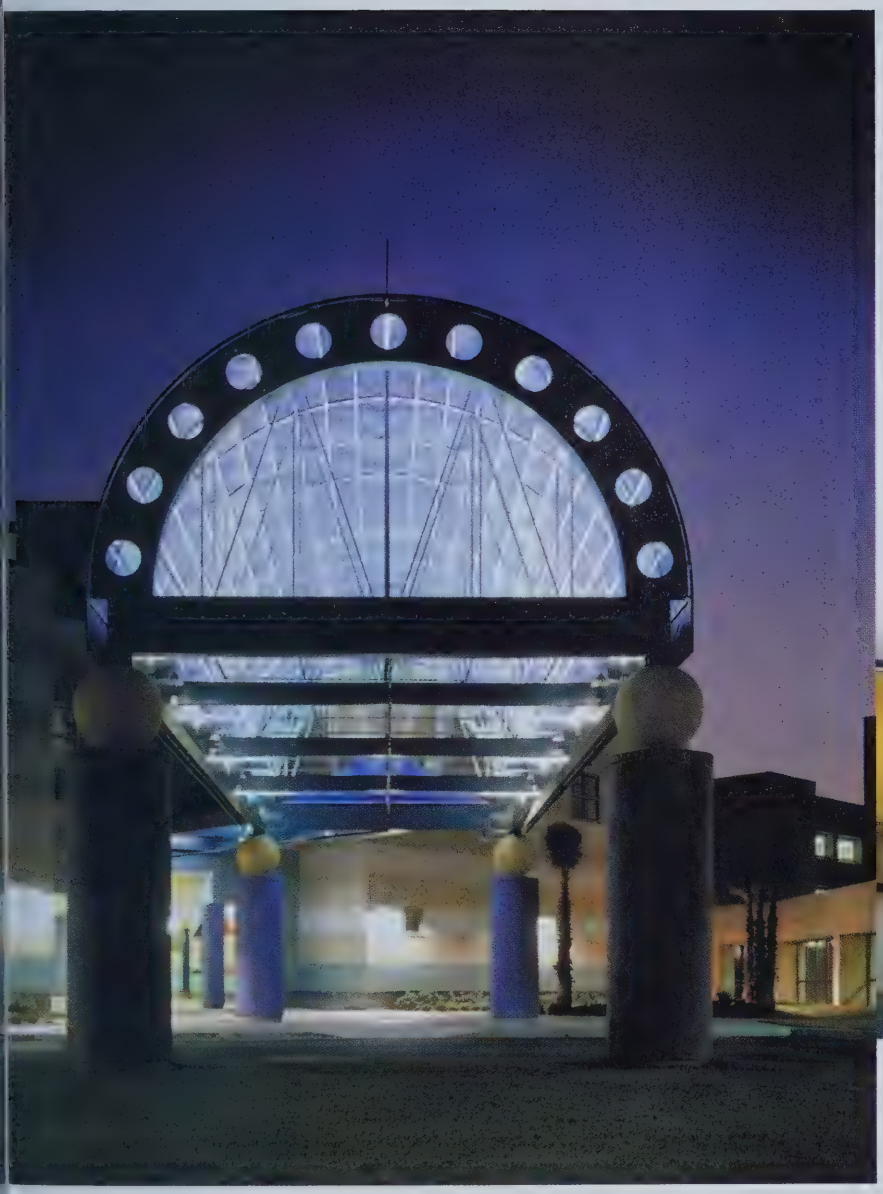
Project team:
Jerry Switzer AIA (principal in charge); Bill Repichowskyj AIA (project manager)

Contractor:
McCarthy Brothers Construction

Consultants:
Bard, Rao + Athanas (MEP)

Focusing on family-centered care, this children's facility for St. Joseph's Hospital is broken down into small units or suites to facilitate personal care-giving and to create a sensitive, small-scale, child-friendly atmosphere. Bright colors and a playful motif welcome and comfort patients and families.

Photos: Paul Bardgjy Photography



Award:
The Courtyard and Main Entrance
Newport Hospital
Newport, Rhode Island

Client:
Newport Hospital

Architect:
Taylor & Partners, Inc.
Boston
www.taylorpartners.com

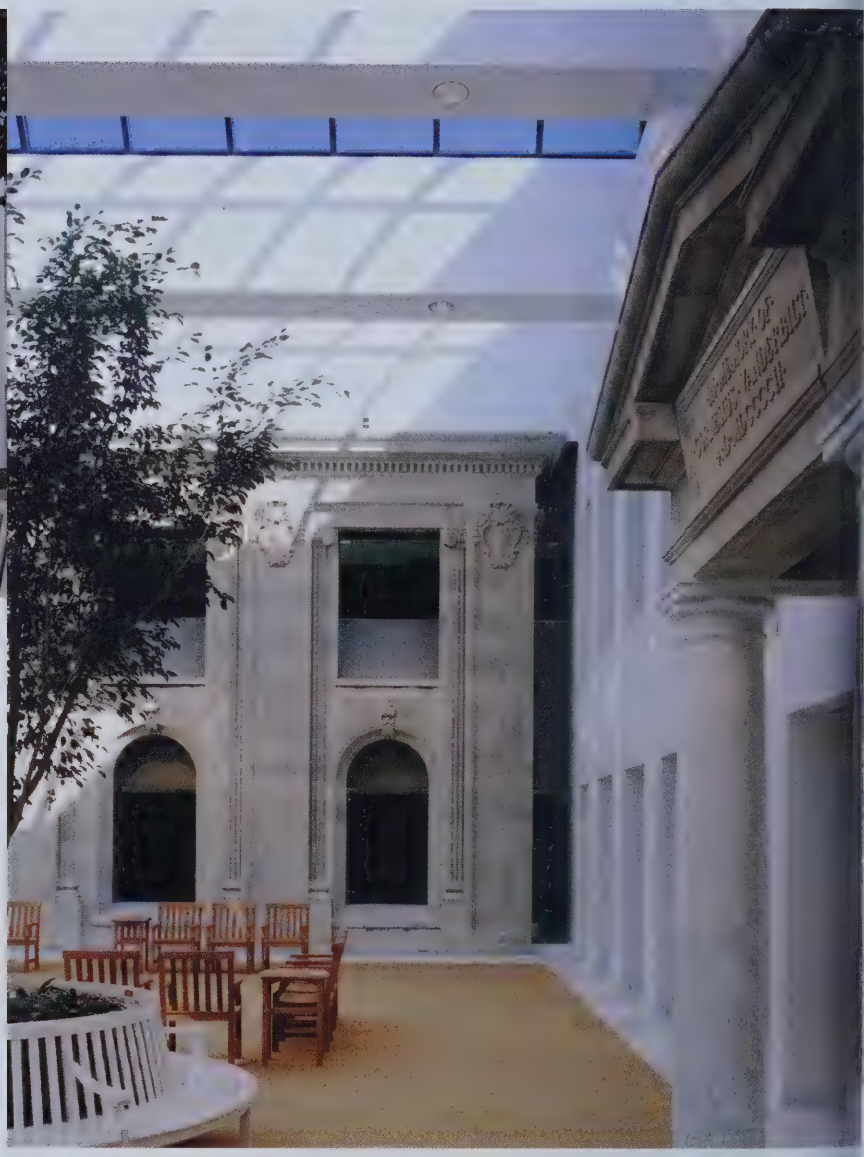
Project team:
Kenneth E. Taylor AIA (principal in charge); Frederick M. Gibson (project director); Joseph M. Welch AIA (project architect); Mary S. Cancian (planner and programmer)

Contractor:
Gilbane Building Co.

Consultants:
McNamara/Salvia, Inc. (structural); Thompson Consultants, Inc. (MEP); Walker-Kluesing Design Group (landscape architect); Crossman Engineering, Inc. (civil); The Sullivan Code Group (codes); Farrar & Associates, Inc. (owner's representative)

The transformation of Newport Hospital into a high-tech ambulatory hospital matches the hospital's strategic mission. Following construction of the strategic masterplan's first two phases, the hospital's facilities provide state-of-the-art technologies in an integrated, serene environment.

Photos: Warren Jagger



Honorable Mention:
Inpatient Pavilion
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Boston

Client:
Partners Healthcare System

Architect:
Cannon Design
Boston
www.cannondesign.com

Project team:
Robert Peterson AIA; Rick Hrycaj AIA; Frank McGuire AIA; Kathleen Wendt IIDA; Stephen Bosselman RA; Kay McManus

Contractor:
William A. Berry & Son, Inc.

Consultants:
Vanderweil Engineers; Rolf Jensen & Associates (fire protection); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); Kern Consulting Group (hardware)

Located atop a 16-story hospital patient tower, the Inpatient Pavilion's design is a response to the needs of a diverse, international patient population. Each patient care unit affords a view of the Boston skyline from a bedroom, a private bath based on a European model, a kitchenette, and a separate office lounge/family area.

Photos: Richard Mandelkorn

Honorable Mention:
Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Client:
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital

Design Architect:
Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott
Boston
www.sbra.com

Architect of Record:
The Hillier Group
Princeton, New Jersey

Contractor:
William Blanchard Company

Consultants:
Granary Associates (project management); O'Donnell & Naccarato (structural); Lehr Associates (MEP); Maser Consulting, P.A. (civil); Medequip International (equipment); The Lighting Practice, Inc. (lighting)

The Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital creates a fresh identity for pediatrics on the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Campus. The building makes use of colorful interiors and intuitive wayfinding to create a comfortable hospital experience for children and families, while state-of-the-art planning and technology offer top-notch care to this urban community.

Photos: Barry Halkin Photography

Honorable Mention:
The Aaron Lazare Medical Research Building
University of Massachusetts Medical School
Worcester, Massachusetts

Client:
The University of Massachusetts Medical School

Architect:
Tsoi/Kobus & Associates, Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.tka-architects.com

Project team:
Ed Tsoi FAIA; Carol Chiles AIA; Erik Mollo-Christensen AIA; Mike Bush AIA; Barbara Carpenter, Assoc. AIA; Alan Peterson

Contractor
Beacon Skanska, Inc.

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants, Inc (structural); Bard Rao + Athanas Consulting Engineers (MEP); GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. (geotechnical); Gordon H. Smith Corporation (building envelope); Cullinan Engineering (civil), GFR Planners Collaborative (planners); Collective Wisdom Corporation (specifications); LeVee & Associates (vertical transportation); R.V. Sullivan (codes); Acoutech Incorporated (acoustics); Rowan Williams Davies & Irwin Inc. (environmental; Schwenne Lighting Design (lighting); Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (transportation; Strata Design Associates, Inc. (landscape architect)

The new 360,000-square-foot Aaron Lazare Medical Research Building establishes a high standard for modern research and development facility design. The core structure provides more than 100,000 net square-feet of research space and also houses associated laboratory support space, conference space, meeting rooms, and office and administrative spaces.

Photos: Robert Benson Photography

2002 BSA/AIA NY Housing Design Awards

JURY

David Berkowitz AIA
Division of Capital Asset Management
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Boston

Alan Joslin AIA
Epstein Joslin Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Paul Segal FAIA
Paul Segal Associates
New York City

Peter Wiederspahn AIA
Northeastern University
Department of Art & Architecture
Boston

HONOR AWARDS

73

Gruzen Samton LLP
TriBeCa Pointe
New York City

74

Machado and Silvetti Associates, Inc.
Scully Hall, Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

75

William Rawn Associates, Architects, Inc.
West Campus Residence Halls
Northeastern University
Boston

AWARDS

75

Deborah Epstein Architect
(presently dba Epstein Joslin Architects)
A House in the Country
Sherborn, Massachusetts

76

Charles Rose Architects, Inc.
(formerly Thompson and Rose Architects, Inc.)
520 West 22nd Street
Chelsea, New York

HONORABLE MENTIONS

76

The Stephen B. Jacobs Group, PC
DUMBO Lofts
Brooklyn, New York

77

Ruhl Walker Architects, Inc.
Loft with Open Arcs
Boston

77

Sasaki Associates, Inc.
Mulberry Street Housing
University of Scranton
Scranton, Pennsylvania

JURY COMMENTS

While most of the work we reviewed exhibited a high level of design competence, we found little innovation, little that was exciting, and even a lack of conviction in some cases, evident in the we-know-this-aesthetic-works-so-let's-apply-it-approach. (Do most of the elderly prefer to live in environments evocative of large old manor houses?)... Has contextualism run its course? Is Modernism quiescent? Is the middle road hard to find? Has the heroic become clichéd? Have we lost clever amenities to tight budgets? Is innovation today about technology rather than form? Why do we still find it almost impossible to design high-quality low-income housing? Is a social conscience adequate justification for a design award? These were among the questions that emerged during our day-long review of the projects submitted to this program.

We were also struck by how often the [portfolio presentations] were either graphically unclear or lacked narrative information necessary to an understanding of the project. For example, several submissions lacked adequate visual and verbal information on neighborhood context. In other instances, visual information on interiors was absent (indeed, it is evident that our profession is still neglecting interiors even in housing where it seems to us interior architecture should be the first issue of design not the last). Architects need to play a much greater role in programming to ensure that developers and other clients are not left without the advantage of architects' planning skills at this crucial stage of a project.

With all these reservations, we are pleased to note that the quality of work we reviewed in general was encouraging and the projects we have chosen to honor are exciting, skillful examples of the design profession at its best.

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Honor Award:
TriBeCa Pointe
New York City

Client:
Rockrose Development Corporation

Architect:
Gruzen Samton LLP
New York City
www.gruzensamton.com

Contractor:
HRH Construction

Consultants:
Cosentini Associates (mechanical); Ysreal A. Seinuk, PC (structural)

This 42-story residential tower is a beacon marking the northernmost reach of New York's Battery Park City. Its seven-story base relates to the adjacent Stuyvesant High School, creating a sensitive human scale for the esplanade along the Hudson River.

Photos: Paul Warchol Photography, Inc

Honor Award:
Scully Hall
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

Client:
Princeton University

Architect:
Machado and Silvetti Associates, Inc.
Boston
www.machado-silvetti.com

Project team:
Rodolfo Machado, Assoc. AIA (principal in charge); Jorge Silvetti, Assoc. AIA; Peter Lofgren AIA (project architect); Douglas Dolezal (project manager); Gretchen Neeley (project design associate); Elizabeth Gibb (project design associate); Mario D'Artista; Max Drivin; Tim Dumbleton; Aaron Follett; David Freed; Brian Huffines; Ben Karty; David Lee; Max Moore; Adam Omansky; Mark Pasnik; Victor Sant'Anna; Robert Trumbour; Ethan Youngerman

Honor Award:
West Campus Residence Halls, Northeastern University
Boston

Client:
Northeastern University

Architect:
William Rawn Associates, Architects, Inc.
Boston
www.rawnarch.com

Contractor:
Irwin & Leighton, Inc.

Consultants:
Lim Consultants, Inc. (structural); TMP Consulting Engineers, Inc. (mechanical/electrical); Van Note-Harvey Associates, PC (civil); Richard Burck Associates, Inc. (landscape architect); LAM Partners, Inc. (lighting); Richard D. White, Architect (specifications)

Scully Hall defines one edge of a new elliptical space containing Princeton's playing fields. The 267-bed dormitory contains student rooms, lounges, study chambers, and kitchenettes. To the north, Scully Hall reinforces an important pedestrian pathway, while its southern edge faces the playing fields with a contemporary façade of folded precast-concrete panels.

Photos: Eduard Hueber / Arch Photo

Project Team:
William L. Rawn FAIA (principal in charge); Clifford Gayley AIA (associate principal, project architect); Chris Kenney (associate); Anne-Sophie Divenyi; Rob Wear; Kevin Bergeron; Lindsay Crawford; Sam Lasky; Neil Walls; Jessica Anderson; Tony Antonja; Lisa Bonfiglio; Daniel Burhans; Wei-Chung Chang; John Clegg; Christian Dick; Denise Ferris; Jennifer Garceau; Rob Genova; Matt Gindel; Lisa Giovanetti; Gary Gwon; Julie Thomas Hess; Alison Kopyt; Victor Liu; Brad Lucas; Deborah Marai; Ed Maximo; Jack Melvin; Jennifer Neuwalder; Michael O'Keefe; Jonathan Parker; Robin Sakahara; Christian Schaller; John Upton; Kristina Varriaro; Lola Vogt; Peter Wells; Hannah Whipple; Ke Zhang

Contractor:
Turner Construction Company

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); TMP Consulting Engineers, Inc. (mechanical); The BSC Group (civil); Ripman Lighting Consultants (lighting); Haley & Aldrich, Inc. (geotechnical); R.E. Cameron Associates (land surveyor); Pressley Associates, Inc. (landscape architect); Hanscomb (cost estimators, phase I); Daedalus Projects Inc. (cost estimators, phase II); Sullivan Code Group (codes)

Three new residence halls at Northeastern University organize a new west section of campus around a major green space. The new residence halls (1,050 beds in 270 apartments) strengthen the university's presence along one of Boston's major avenues, directly across from the venerable Museum of Fine Arts. Project cost: $64,000,000.

Photo: Steve Rosenthal

Award:
A House in the Country
Sherborn, Massachusetts

Architect:
Deborah Epstein Architect (presently dba Epstein Joslin Architects)
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.epsteinjoslin.com

Contractors:
Marc Truant Construction Managers (phase I)
Kistler & Knapp Builders Inc. (phase 2)

Consultants:
LeMessurier Associates (structural); Stephen Stimson Landscape Architect (landscape architect); Anna Birkerts Design (furnishings); Repertoire (furnishings); Bernie Reinhart (millwork); Whitcomb Brothers (millwork)

A transformation of an ordinary house into a country villa that is both functional and fun. A 120-foot long "wavy wall" opens the living room, dining room, and kitchen to nature, defines an amphitheater, and results from the new screen porch pavilion to the woods.

Photos: Steve Rosenthal

Honorable Mention:
DUMBO Lofts
Brooklyn, New York

Client and Contractor:
Two Trees Management

Architect:
The Stephen B. Jacobs Group, PC
New York City
www.sbjgroup.com

Consultants:
Andi Pepper Interior Design (interior designer); Rosenwasser/Grossman Consulting Engineers, PC (structural); Ettinger Associates (mechanical)

The design of the building establishes a new residential presence in the emerging "Dumbo" (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge) neighborhood. The façade is richly ornamented with subtle brick articulation and detailing, recalling earlier historic buildings. The massing reflects new zoning guidelines intended to reinforce the existing context.

Photo: Ben Rahn

Award:
520 West 22nd Street
Chelsea, New York

Client:
Michael Weinstein

Architect:
Charles Rose Architects, Inc.
(formerly Thompson and Rose Architects, Inc.)
Somerville, MA
www.charlesrosearchitects.com

Contractor:
Higgins Construction c/o ARK Restaurants

Consultants:
Reynaldo C. Prego Consulting Engineers (MEP); Vairamides Georgeopolis Engineers (structural); Corfian Enterprises Limited (steel); Thomas Balsley Associates (landscape architect); Impressive Interiors (millwork); Lightforms (lighting); Alexander Von Eikh Design (painter)

The primary residence of 520 West 22nd Street is redesigned with three levels, wrapped around a garden on the entry level. The garden creates an airy void that opens up to the New York sky and also reflects the client's desire for outdoor spaces and light-filled interiors.

Photos: Chuck Choi

Honorable Mention:
Loft with Open Arcs
Boston

Client:
Barbara and Richard Corkey

Architect:
Ruhl Walker Architects, Inc.
Boston
www.ruhlwalker.com

Contractor:
Sea-Dar Enterprises, Inc.

Two adjacent apartments have been combined to create a home for owners moving from the suburbs to the city. Three polished-plaster curving walls organize the space. The walls serve the owner's minimal privacy requirements while accentuating long, defined views across the apartment and to distant landmarks beyond.

Photos: Ruhl Walker

Honorable Mention:
Mulberry Street Housing
University of Scranton
Scranton, Pennsylvania

Client:
University of Scranton
Administrative Services

Architect:
Sasaki Associates, Inc.
Watertown, Massachusetts
www.sasaki.com

Project team:
Ricardo Dumont; Nancy Freedman AIA; Nancy Harrod; Daniel Bernstein

Contractor:
Sordoni Construction Services, Inc.

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants, Inc. (structural); HSA Associates (MEP); Ceco Associates (civil); Kalin Associates (specifications)

The four-building, 144-bed complex of student residences on an urban site creates a strong street edge animated by multiple entries, which replicate the rhythm of front doors and porches found on nearby streets. The Gothic-inspired design features steeply pitched roofs, tall windows, and pointed archways leading from the street to a private courtyard space.

Photo: Alex MacLean, Landslides

BSA/IIDA/ASID Interior Architecture/ Interior Design Awards

JURY

William Clegg IIDA
Schoenhardt Architects;
President, IIDA New England
Simsbury, Connecticut

Martha Hadden IIDA, ASID
Hadden Associates
Marblehead, Massachusetts

Rhiannon Hayes
Key Office Interiors
Boston

Maryellen Liddell ASID
The Liddell Company
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts

John Meyer Jr. AIA
Meyer & Meyer Architects
Boston

Rachel Pike ASID, IIDA
Wentworth Institute of Technology
Boston

JURY COMMENTS

...In general, the body of work we had the opportunity to review suggested that contemporary interiors are cold and hard, and much of what we saw was dominated by stainless steel and primary colors. There also seemed to be a number of efforts to put large California-like spaces into smaller New England contexts; we were more impressed with simple, classical contemporary approaches that seemed more suitable to this region....The general quality of work was impressive, competent even when not inspirational, and reflected well on the architecture and interior design professions in New England.

Editor's note:
The full text of jury comments, including responses to individual projects and the jury's recommendations on the preparation of submissions, may be found at www.architects.org/design_awards_programs

HONOR AWARDS

79
Adolfo Perez, Architect
Private Residence
Pride's Crossing, Massachusetts

80
William Rawn Associates, Architects, Inc.
Glavin Family Chapel
Babson College
Wellesley, Massachusetts

81
Ruhl Walker Architects, Inc.
H/R Loft
Boston

82
Urban Instruments, Inc.
MIT Museum Renovation
Cambridge, Massachusetts

83
Peter H. Wiederspahn, Architect
High-Rise House
New York City

AWARDS

84
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc.
Epstein Becker & Green offices
Boston

84
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc.
Palmer & Dodge LLP offices
Boston

85
JunglBrannen Associates, Inc.
Course Technology
Boston

Honor Award:
Private Residence
Pride's Crossing, Massachusetts

Architect:
Adolfo Perez, Architect
Newton, Massachusetts
www.aparchitect.com

Contractor
Thoughtforms Corporation

The challenge was to respect, yet enhance, the qualities of a new, architecturally significant house. Accordingly, the interior architecture is conceived of as freestanding architectural elements, detached from the architecture of the house and designed to balance its almost primitive character with a palette of refined, but robust, materials and finishes.

Photos
Nick Wheeler/Wheeler Photography

Honor Award:
Glavin Family Chapel
Babson College
Wellesley, Massachusetts

Client:
Babson College

Architect:
William Rawn Associates, Architects, Inc.
Boston

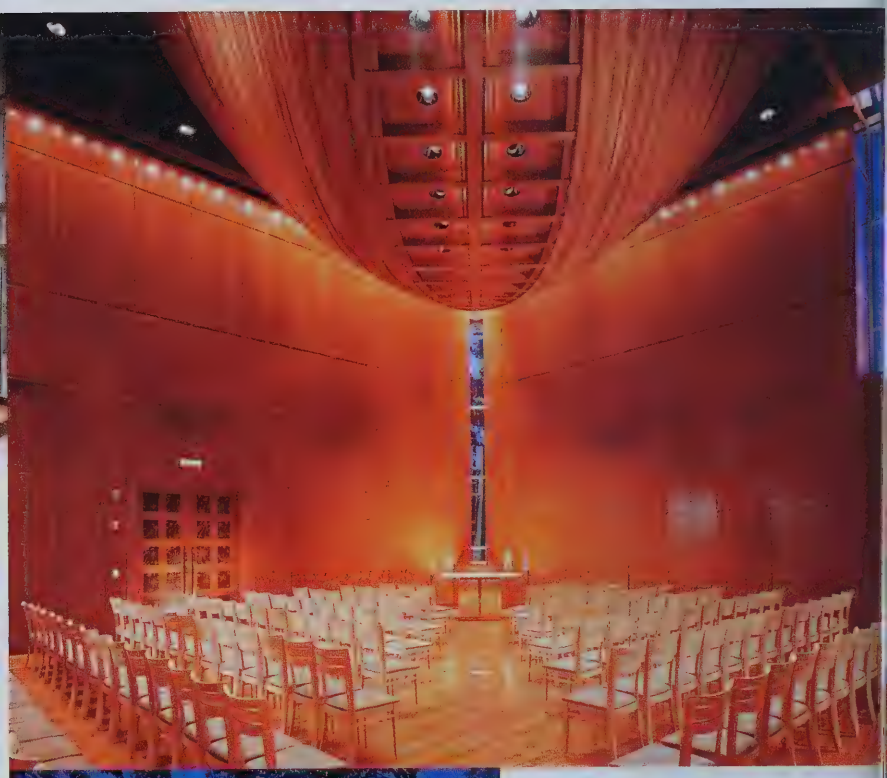
Project team:
William L. Rawn III, FAIA (principal in charge); Alan Joslin AIA (principal); Robert Wear (project architect); Paul Pennie (site representative)

Contractor:
Erland Construction

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consulting (structural); TMP Consulting Engineers, Inc. (mechanical); Carol R. Johnson Associates (landscape architect); R. Lawrence Kirkegaard & Assoc. (acoustics); Ripman Lighting Consultants (lighting); Mitch Ryerson with Rick Wrigley (hanging hull fabricator); Gatehouse Furnishings (altar and doors); McGrain Design (stained-glass artist); Serpentino Glass (stained-glass fabricator); Frances G. Pratt (tower sculpture)

The Glavin Family Chapel is a non-denominational sanctuary for gatherings of 150 people. Two solid walls of granite face toward the busy campus center, and two walls of glass open the 30-foot-high space to the wooded area beyond.

Photos: Steve Rosenthal



Honor Award:
H/R Loft
Boston

Architect:
Ruhl Walker Architects, Inc.
Boston
www.ruhlwalker.com

Contractor:
Sea-Dar Enterprises, Inc.

Consultants:
Dave Blakney (steel wall);
Brian Gibson (A/V)

The owners desired freely flowing, multi-functional spaces. The primary feature is a steel and acrylic screen. It conceals office and storage space while serving as the primary interior light source. Brushed aluminum panels diffuse natural light deep into the loft, and sliding walls accommodate fluctuating privacy needs.

Photos: Jordi Miralles Fotografia

Honor Award:
MIT Museum Renovation
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Client:
MIT Museum

Architect:
Urban Instruments, Inc.
Newton, Massachusetts
www.urbaninstruments.com

Project team:
Wellington Reiter AIA; Greg Russell

Contractor:
Shawmut Design and Construction

Consultants:
Francis J. Linehan, Jr. and Associates

The new entrance to the MIT Museum complements the high-tech image of the University. The insertion of a stainless steel stair between two existing buildings connects the street with the second-floor lobby. The stair is lit from below and appears to float between the two structures.

Photos: Peter Vanderwarker (interior); Stuart Clements and Will Howcroft (exterior)

Honor Award:
High-Rise House
New York City

Client:
Ty Tessitore and Maria Canale

Architect:
Peter H. Wiederspahn, Architect
Somerville, Massachusetts

Contractor:
Barry Fishelberg Company, Inc.

Consultants:
Gilsans Murry Steficek (structural)

[illegible] stacked, 1,500-square-foot apartments were connected by cutting through the reinforced concrete floor and installing an internal stair. On the upper level, most of the existing partitions were removed, creating an open living/dining space with [illegible] expanse of windows framing an extraordinary view of [illegible]

Award:
Palmer & Dodge LLP offices
Boston

Client:
Palmer & Dodge LLP

Architect:
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc.
Boston

Project team:
Janis Mones AIA, IIDA; Kathy Powers; Jim Higgins; Michael O'Brien; Lana Kiefaber; Patrick Planeta; Meredith Basque

Contractor:
John Moriarty & Associates

Consultants:
Spaulding & Slye Colliers (PM); McNamara/Salvia, Inc. (structural); LAM Partners (lighting); Colburn & Guyette (kitchen); The Cavan Group (data/communications); Nicholas Browse & Associates (AV); TMP Consulting Engineers, Inc. (MEP)

Award:
Epstein Becker & Green offices
Boston

Client:
Epstein Becker & Green

Architect:
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares, Inc.
Boston, MA
www.cbtarchitects.com

Project team:
Janis Mones AIA, IIDA; Erin Kennedy; Michael O'Brien; Laurie Lebbon; Jan Abercrombie; Meghan Lewis

Contractor:
Beacon Skanska, Inc.

Consultants:
Leggat McCall Properties, LLC (PM); R.G. Vanderweil & Associates (MEP); McNamara/Salvia, Inc. (structural); Schweppe Lighting Design (lighting); View Communications (data/communications); WBA Associates (codes); Acentech, Inc. (acoustics)

The design of the 50,000-square-foot offices includes a reception area that is inviting and personal. New materials and unique details are featured throughout, including walls made of Imago, a custom stair of hand-forged iron with decorative hand-blown glass inserts, and leather on handrails and stair treads.

Photo: Lucy Chen Photography

With the client's move from traditional downtown offices to new space in an outlying area of Boston, the design sought to update the law firm's image. The 187,000-square-foot space includes a two-story reception area. Glass-enclosed conference rooms flank a dramatic stair that serves as the focal point for the room.

Photos:
Edward Jacoby/Jacoby Photography

Award:
Course Technology
Boston

Client:
Course Technology

Architect:
JunglBrannen Associates, Inc.
Boston
www.jungbrannen.com

Project team:
Jeannine Campbell (director of interior design); Dorran Prescott (interior designer); Renana Keynes (interior designer); Steve Wagner (project architect)

Contractor:
T.R. White

Consultants:
Trammell Crow Company; Weidlinger Associates, Inc.; Richard D. Kimball Co, Inc.

In the new 66,000-square-foot office of Course Technology, a publisher of information technology instructional materials, the designers converted three adjacent warehouse buildings into a single work environment, drawing inspiration from the old brick walls, massive wood columns, large windows, and freight elevators.

Photos: Richard Mandelkorn

2002 Unbuilt Architecture Awards

JURY

Robert Campbell FAIA
architecture critic, *The Boston Globe*
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Brian Healy AIA
Brian Healy Architects
Boston

George Marsh AIA
Payette Associates
Boston

Laura Miller
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Henry Moss AIA
Bruner/Cott & Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

George Thrush AIA
Chair, Department of Architecture
Northeastern University
Boston

Editor's note:
Jury comments, including responses to individual projects, may be found at www.architects.org/design_awards_programs

HONOR AWARDS

87

L/IS Levit Iwamoto Scott
Flemington Jewish Community Center
Flemington, New Jersey

88

Keith Mitnick with Mireille Roddier and Stewart Hicks
Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies/Burnham Prize Competition
Chicago

88

Marilys R. Nepomechie Architect
Scattered Houses: Little Haiti Affordable Infill Housing
Miami, Florida

89

StoSS landscape urbanism
The Papago Trail
Phoenix–Scottsdale–Tempe
Arizona

AWARDS

90

Edmonds + Lee
Marblehead Residence
Marblehead, Massachusetts

90

Johannes M.P. Knoops
Evoking Obsolete Devices with Kinetic Fantasies
Additions to the Museo della Mura Porta San Sebastiano on the Appian Way, Rome, Italy

91

J.P. Maruszczak and Roger Connah
Wet Site: Chromatopia 01

91

Vincent Snyder, Architect
The Omaha Tribal Interpretive Center and Museum
Omaha Indian Reservation
Macy, Nebraska

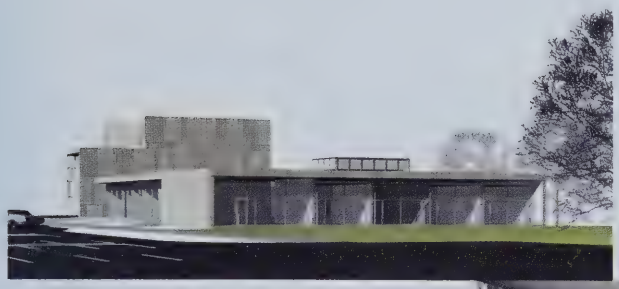
Honor Award:
Flemington Jewish Community Center
Flemington, New Jersey

Designer:
L/IS Levit Iwamoto Scott
Toronto, Canada and Berkeley, California

Project team:
Craig Scott; Robert Levit; Lisa Iwamoto; Olivia Hyde; Je-Uk Kim; Tonino Vicari; Damian Petrescu; Grace Ahn; Sung-Won Lee; Sunil Park

The split between the secular and religious parts of the building is reflected in the building's form. The glowing sanctuary interior is hidden within the mute exterior. A "landscape" of luminous glass courtyards and skylights creates a pattern through the building's secular and religious features.

Renderings: L/IS



Honor Award:
Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies (Burnham Prize Competition)
Chicago

Designers:
Keith Mitnick with Mireille Roddier and Stewart Hicks
Ann Arbor, Michigan

A design for a Jewish studies institute on Michigan Avenue. The program includes a library, a research institute, and a college. A strong civic presence along the monumental wall of existing buildings and the augmentation of the existing program with new uses may facilitate greater interaction between the institution and the neighborhood.

Honor Award:
Scattered Houses: Little Haiti Affordable Infill Housing
Miami, Florida

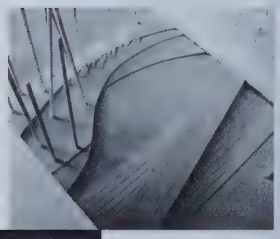
Client:
School of Architecture Practice (S.O.A.P.)
Florida International University

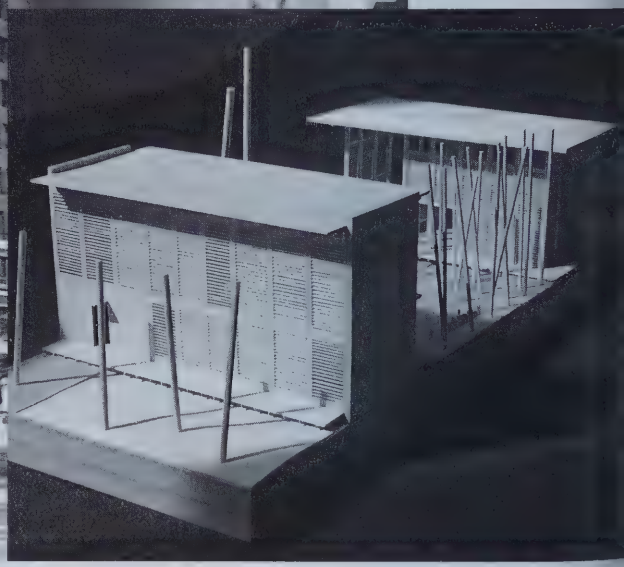
Designer:
Marilys R. Nepomechie Architect
Coconut Grove, Florida

Project team:
Marilys R. Nepomechie AIA (architect); Marta Canavés IIDA (landscape design); Daniel Romero; Ricardo Herran; Julio Pulido; Roberto Bezold

Comprising two independent structures, this infill project is designed for scattered empty lots in Little Haiti, an historic neighborhood that has served as the point of entry to Miami and the US for sequential constituencies: The project adapts the building traditions of the neighborhood and region to the cultural traditions of its Haitian population.

Photos: Marta Canavés IIDA





Honor Award:
The Papago Trail
Phoenix–Scottsdale–Tempe, Arizona

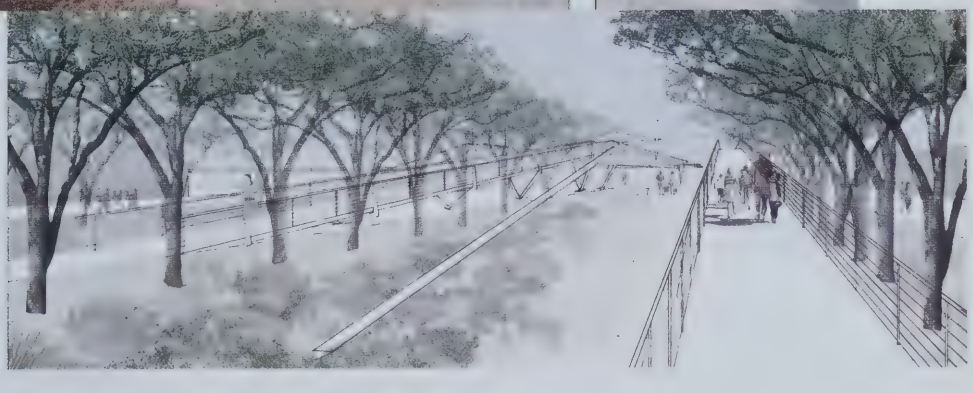
Client:
Papago Salado Association
Sponsors: National Endowment for the Arts New Public Works Initiative, the Salt River Project, and the Cities of Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tempe

Designers:
StoSS landscape urbanism
lead consultant, planning, landscape architecture
Boston
www.stoss.net

Project team:
Chris Reed; Aki Omi; Anri Linden; Benjamin Kuchinsky; Sarah Williams; Ryosuke Shimoda; Joe Herda

Consultants:
Office dA, Inc. (architecture, infrastructure); Tomato (communications); James Carpenter Design (public art); SWCA Environmental (environmental); The Bioengineering Group (bioengineering); Arup (engineering)

The Papago Trail is a framework of civic landscapes that define a new public realm along a 12-mile circuit of large-scale irrigation canals. The proposed landscape-infrastructures serve as markers, destinations, flood control devices, ecological demonstrations, and urban experiences both along the trail and within their broader metropolitan context.



Award:
Marblehead Residence
Marblehead, Massachusetts

Designer:
Edmonds + Lee
New York City
www.edmondslee.com

Project team:
Robert Edmonds (principal); Vivian Lee (principal)

Contractor:
Kistler & Knapp Builders

Consultants:
Landworks Studio (landscape architect); Sarkis Zerounian (structural)

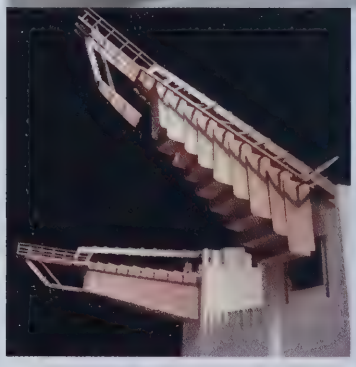
Located on Marblehead Neck atop a rock ledge, the house's spaces are arranged within an L-shaped plan that brackets two outdoor courtyards. The entire lower level is depressed into the earth to reduce the overall scale of the building and to shelter the house and the main outdoor courtyard.

Award:
Evoking Obsolete Devices with Kinetic Fantasies
Additions to the Museo della Mura
Porta San Sebastiano on the Appian Way, Rome, Italy

Designer:
Johannes M.P. Knoops
Fellow, American Academy in Rome
(Project accomplished by a Rome Prize Fellowship to the American Academy in Rome.)

Porta San Sebastiano's last transformation occurred centuries ago to provide higher perches for engines of war such as the catapult. While pondering this past, Kinetic Fantasies proposes two retractable auditoriums for lectures and films. Structured on massive arms like those of a catapult, the auditoriums cantilever from the towers.

Photos: Johannes M.P. Knoops



Award:
Wet Site:
Chromatopia 01
Fraser River Basin, British Columbia

Designers:
J.P. Maruszczak and Roger Connah
Fort Worth, Texas and Ruthin, Wales

The project is a combined park and schoolyard designed as a place for exploration and learning for children and young adults. Blue, white, black, and green map a set of changing affinities between material, program, building, and landscape. Play and learning are explored to define park and wetland infrastructure patterns, educational programming, and topographical poetics.

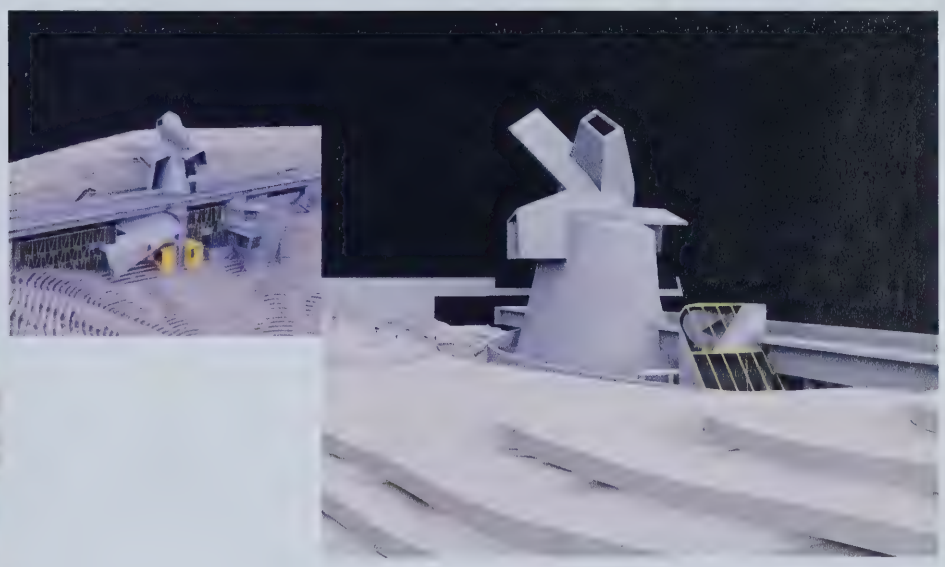
Award:
The Omaha Tribal Interpretive Center and Museum
Omaha Indian Reservation, Macy, Nebraska

Client:
The Omaha Nation

Designer:
Vincent Snyder, Architect
Austin, Texas

Project team:
Vincent Snyder; Jon Geib; Matt Ames; Tim Whitehall; Michael Neveu

Sited on the historic bluffs overlooking the Missouri River, this project is intended to house and display the most sacred of ancestral items returned by Harvard's Peabody Museum to the Omaha Tribe in 1989. Other programmed areas target educational opportunities and tourism to serve as an economic catalyst for the community.



Chromatopia

Wet *Site*

ultimately
(there is never an 'ultimately'

Wet Site is the exploration of a *chroma*-topography as a cognitive and dynamic game landscape for children Blue,white,black, and green map a set of changing affinities between material program building, and landscape. Play and learning are explored to define new patterns of park and wetland infrastructure, educational programming,and topographical poetics

Program: The program asked for the design of a combined park and schoolyard as a place for exploration and learning for children and young adults The specific requirements were as follows *Park* - Entrance/Parking, Outdoor Play Areas Hockey,Basketball, & Soccer Fields, and Wetlands Retention Areas *School*- Six Modular Classrooms, Cafeteria, & Community Building

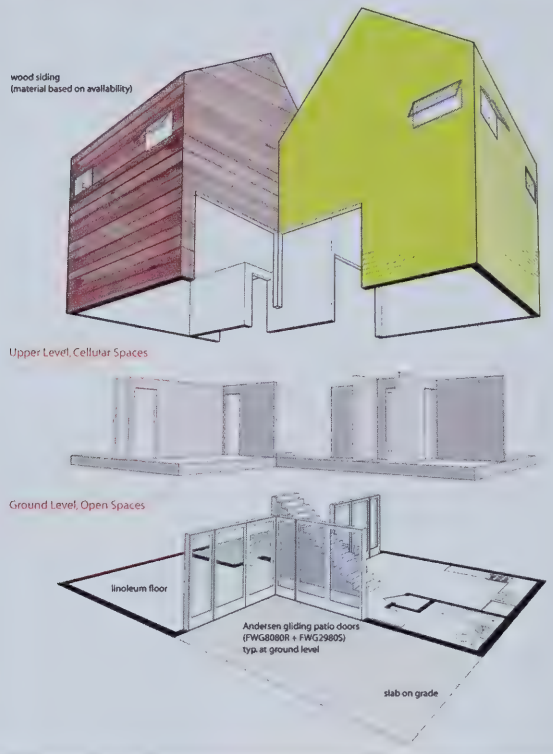
Site The site is located in the Fraser River Basin in East Clayton,British Columbia, Canada The site will contain a retention area and wetland area and will play a role in the green plan of the area

. . . .
just as in the game of spotting the 'beetle'
« slug bug no tag back ! » the girl cries
pleased with this moment's triumph,
this moment's gain in the garden
(or monet's gain ?)
but waiting for the next

ultimately
(there is never an 'ultimately')
in play grounded but always in flight

YPAC Affordable Housing Competition

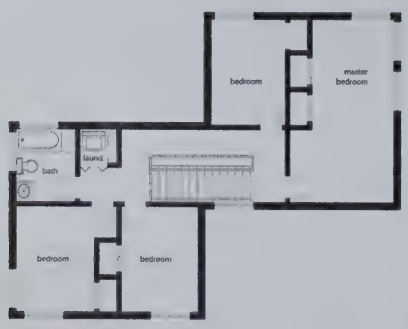
Sponsored by the BSA's Young Professionals Advisory Council (YPAC) and South Shore Habitat for Humanity (SSHH)



Honor Award
StudioAPT
(Julia McMorrough, John McMorrough)
Cambridge, Massachusetts

In trying to make a habitat for humanity, reasonable desires (in this case: simplicity, decency, and affordability) can have the unintended effect of constraint. What is the line between simplicity and luxury? How much accommodation is too much? New materials and custom details are inappropriate because of the added cost and need for specialist labor. Formal inventiveness has an upper limit defined by the overwhelming expectation that the house be "simple."

Where then are the possibilities within such constraint? The possibilities left to the architect are a narrow range of adjustments in configuration, and within that range, we propose a "habitat shift" as a means of triangulating the pressures of cost and expectation. With a simple shift of volume, new conditions are created: a flexible orientation, an enhanced relationship with the site and exterior, a new spaciousness along the diagonal with a visual lock that limits views into the house from the street, but which from the interior allows views into the entire set of rooms. Our proposal is for a house that is ultimately still simple in plan, decent in provision, and affordable within the general Habitat economy.



second floor

ground floor

JURY

Victoria Beach AIA

Carol Dennison (SSHFH)

George Ferland (SSHFH)

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA

Haril Pandya, Assoc. AIA

Alfred Wojciechowski AIA

COMPETITION AUTHORS

Adam Wagner, Assoc. AIA

Jessica Zlotogura, Assoc. AIA

This competition was open to any architect or designer living in the state of Massachusetts who had been out of school 10 years or fewer and to all architecture students in the state of Massachusetts.

The program, which did not specify a site, called for a prototypical two-, three- or four-bedroom house which could be used to provide a new home for a Habitat for Humanity family. HFH houses are typically constructed by volunteers under the guidance of professional builders. Winners were invited to interviews with South Shore Habitat for Humanity.

For more information on YPAC, go to www.architects.org

For more information on HFH, go to www.habitat.org

Award
Scott Henderson
Cambridge, Massachusetts

The style fits the massing and vernacular of the South Shore, placing an emphasis on passive solar heat gain and a flexible floor plan. Utilizing sustainable and energy efficient materials as allowed by the budget, the goal is to conserve energy, minimize environmental impact, and promote human health.

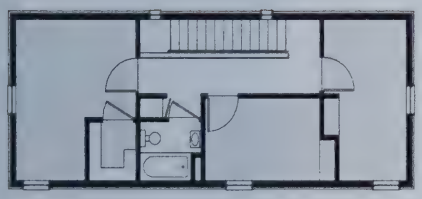
Photo: Scott Henderson

Award
Jack Ryan
Providence, Rhode Island

Projections are made in three directions: forward/back, left/right and up/down. Forward/back projections establish the main living spaces. Left/right projections create areas of rest and solitude including window seats, and built-in desks. Up/down projections provide circulation of movement, air, conversation, and light.

Photos: Jack Ryan

second floor



ground floor

second floor

ground floor

HMFH Architects, Inc.
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Michael McCloskey Design Group

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– Doug Downie
Operations Manager, Eastern Region
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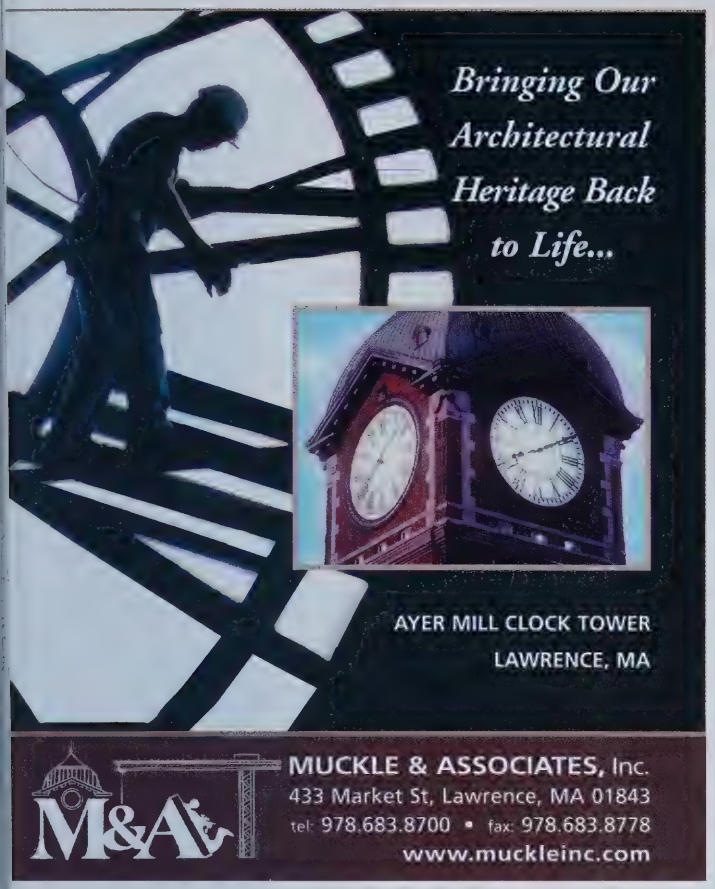

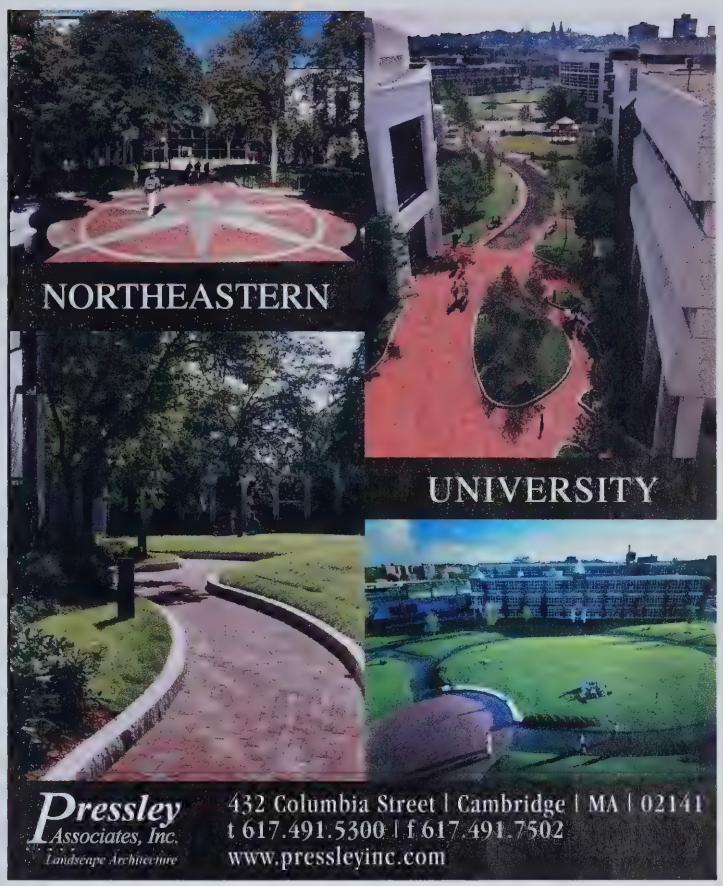

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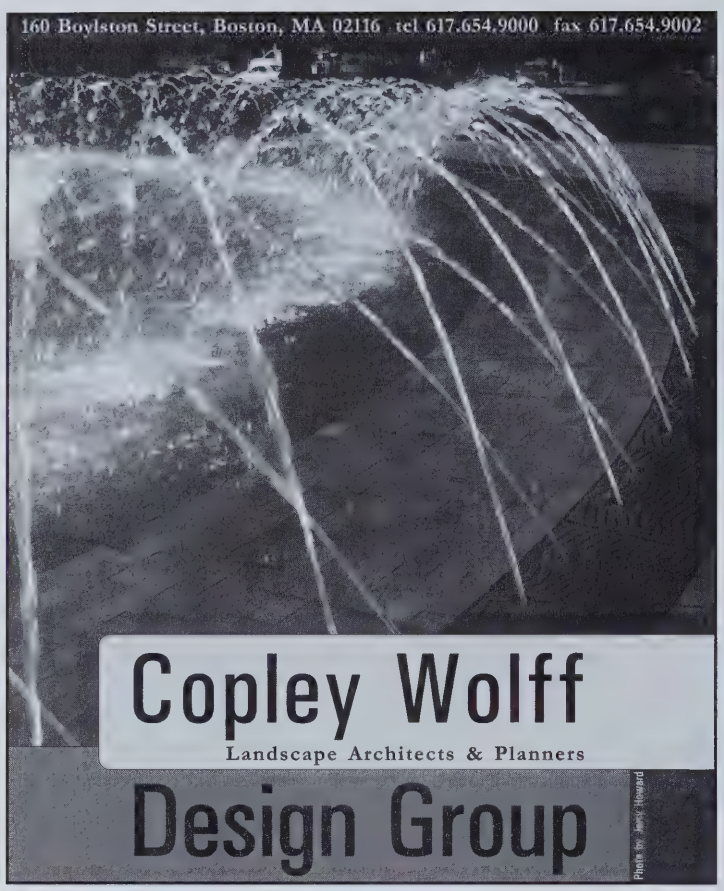
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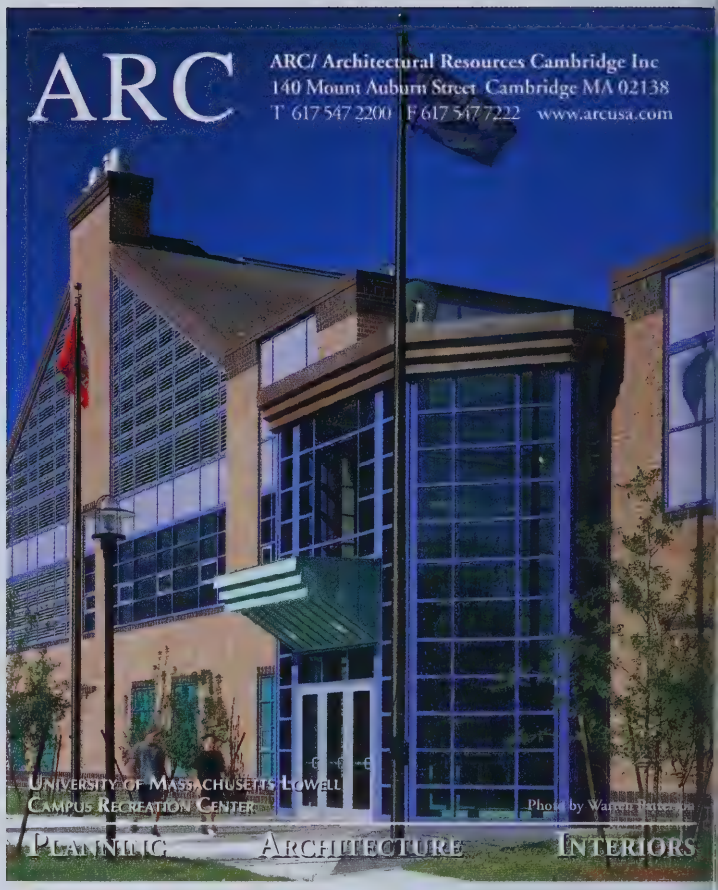
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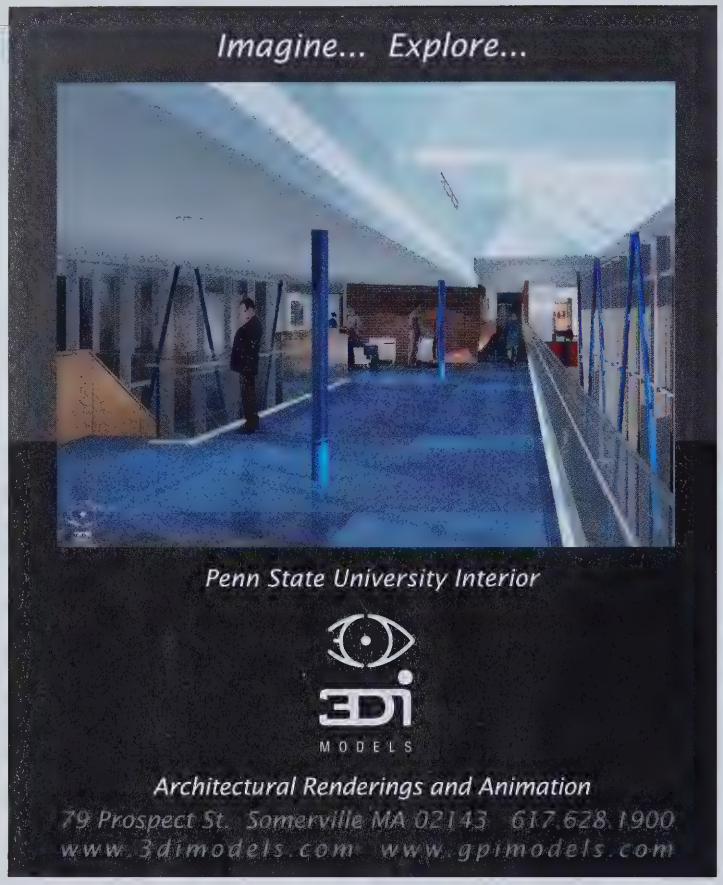
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THE GUIDE TO CONSULTANTS, CONTRACTORS, AND MANUFACTURERS

This Guide is published by the Boston Society of Architects/AIA to connect building industry professionals with allied vendors and consultants. The Guide is also available online at www.architects.org/guide. For advertising information, please see page 117.

Consultants, contractors, and manufacturers are listed alphabetically under each of the following categories:

Accounting/Financial
Acoustical Consultants
ADA Compliance and Universal Design
Architectural 3-D Modeling and Rendering
Architectural Illustration and Rendering
Architectural Photography
Architectural Tours
Audio/Visual Consultants
Audio/Visual Design and Installation
Audio/Visual Integration
Audio/Visual Systems
Auditorium/Theater Consulting
Building Envelope
Building Insulation
Building Science Consulting
Business Performance Analysis
CADD and Plotting
Casework Hardware
Civil Engineering
Code Consulting
Commissioning Authorities
Computer Services
Construction Management
Consulting Engineers
Contractors
Copying and Reprographic Services
Cost Estimating
Custom Furniture
Electrical Engineering
Energy Consulting
Environmental Graphic Design/ Graphic Design
Environmental Specialists
Existing Conditions Surveys
Facility Management
Facility Programming
Fire Protection Engineers
Fire Stopping
Food Services Consultants
General Contractors
Historic Restoration
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IAQ Consulting
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Kitchen and Bath Design
Land Surveyors
Landscape Architecture and Planning
Legal Services
Lighting Design
Mailroom Consultants
Management Consultants
Marketing
Masonry
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Placement Services
Play Area Materials and Equipment
Plumbing Engineers
Post and Beam Construction
Precast Building Components
Program Management
Roofing
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Specifications Services
Stone and Tile Installation
Stone and Tile Suppliers
Structural Engineers
Telecommunications/Technology
Transportation Engineers
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ACCOUNTING/ FINANCIAL	**BSA Accounts-Receivable Management Services**	246 Algonquin Trail Ashland MA 01721 508-231-5034 janetallison@attbi.com Contact: Janet Allison	A tactful, effective fee-collection and accounts-receivable management service designed to preserve and strengthen your relationship with your clients. It works.
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	RSM McGladrey	21 B Street Burlington MA 01803 781-685-3500 f: 781-272-6300 lou_sannella@rsmi.com www.rsmmcgladrey.com Contact: Louis J. Sannella, Partner	RSM McGladrey is a business consulting, accounting and tax firm focused on serving mid-sized companies. RSM McGladrey Boston (local office) provides the industry-specific expertise to help architectural and engineering companies throughout New England succeed.
	Tofias PC BSA Corporate Affiliate	350 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge MA 02139-4131 888-761-8835 f: 617-761-0601 info@tofias.com www.tofias.com Contact: Marc Busny	Industry-specific expertise delivered through our architectural team of professionals including: accounting, auditing, taxation, employee benefits and business valuation services. Request our annual architectural survey.
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ADA COMPLIANCE AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN	**Adaptive Environments** BSA Corporate Affiliate	374 Congress Street, Suite 301 Boston MA 02210-1807 617-695-1225 v/tty f: 617-482-8099 vfletcher@adaptiveenvironments.org www.adaptiveenvironments.org Contact: Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director	Adaptive Environments provides a spectrum of universal design consultation and training including technical assistance and design review. We help you find inclusive solutions that work.
	Deborah A. Ryan & Associates	592 East Broadway South Boston MA 02127 617-268-9423 f: 617-268-9437 dryanaccess@aol.com Contact: Deborah A. Ryan	Deborah A. Ryan & Associates provides technical assistance, plan review, design assistance, expert witness testimony as well as assistance with the variance process and complaint resolution as they apply to the state's accessibility requirements.
	Garaventa Accessibility	4 Bound Brook Court Scituate, MA 02066 800-276-5438 f: 781-545-0716 jhunt@garaventausa.com www.garaventausa.com Contact: James Hunt	Providing application design and equipment selection assistance to meet architectural accessibility requirements throughout the New England states. Manufactures, installs and services all manner of wheelchair lifts, LULA elevators, emergency egress appliances.
	Kessler McGuinness & Associates, LLC	110 Madison Avenue Newtonville MA 02460 617-641-2802 v/tty f: 617-641-2812 kmcguinness@kmaccess.com www.kmaccess.com Contact: Katherine A. McGuinness, Associate AIA	Kessler McGuinness & Associates provides expert consultation in accessibility and universal design. We assist architects and owners in clarifying which accessible design/construction standards apply to their projects and how to comply with overlapping ADA, AAB, and other accessible design requirements.
	New England ADA Technical Assistance Center c/o Adaptive Environments BSA Corporate Affiliate	374 Congress Street, Suite 301 Boston MA 02210 800-949-4232 v/tty f: 617-482-8099 adainfo@newenglandada.org www.newenglandada.org Contact: ADA Information	The New England ADA Center provides free information and guidance on the Americans with Disabilities Act. Training tailored to your needs is also available.

ADA Compliance and Universal Design continued	**Sullivan Code Group** BSA Corporate Affiliate	343 Commercial Street Unit 302, Union Wharf Boston MA 02109 617-523-8227 f: 617-523-8016 pds@rwsullivan.com www.rwsullivan.com Contact: Paul D. Sullivan, P.E. President	The Sullivan Code Group provides accessibility audits of buildings and facilities, plan review for compliance with ADA, MAAB, and Section 504 (HUD) requirements, and variance processing at the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board.
ARCHITECTURAL 3-D MODELING AND RENDERING	**GPI Models**	79 Prospect Street Somerville MA 02143 617-628-1900 f: 617-628-1901 info@gpimodels.com www.gpimodels.com Contact: Sergio Marino	Full service architectural model shop and computer renderings/animations services. Quick turn around time. All under one roof.
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	Gary Irish Graphics	Old Pilgrim Trail Marshfield MA 02050 617-247-4168 f: 781-837-8548 girish@garyirishgraphics.com www.garyirishgraphics.com Contact: Gary Irish, ASAI	Architectural renderings, watercolor, and pen and ink. We meet any deadline.
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ARCHITECTURAL TOURS	**International Architects On Tour** BSA Corporate Affiliate	187 Butterfield Drive Novato CA 94945 888-802-8303 / 415-209-0637 f: 415-209-0638 deborah@architectsontour.com www.architectsontour.com Contact: Deborah Castellucci	The international architectural tour service sponsored by the BSA has been taking architects and others to the Far East, Europe, Latin America and elsewhere during the past decade. We offer several tours every year.
AUDIO/VISUAL CONSULTANTS	**Acentech Incorporated** BSA Corporate Affiliate	33 Moulton Street Cambridge MA 02138-1118 617-499-8000 f: 617-499-8074 crosenberg@acentech.com www.acentech.com Contact: Carl J. Rosenberg	Acentech's staff of more than 35 consultants provides services in architectural acoustics, noise and vibration control, and the design of sound, audiovisual, and sound masking systems. For more than 50 years architects and engineers have turned to our professionals for comprehensive consulting services for corporations, schools, laboratories, performance halls and more.
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	Merrimack Engineering Services, Inc.	66 Park Street Andover MA 01810 978-475-3555 f: 978-475-1448 merreng@aol.com www.merrimackengineering.com Contact: Stephen Stapinski	Merrimack Engineering Services, Inc. provides site engineering design for institutional, industrial, commercial and all types of residential developments. Specialties include grading, drainage, sewer and other utility design, including septic system design. The firm specializes in permitting projects of all types, BWSC plans, site plans, and subdivision design.
	VHB/Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	101 Walnut Street PO Box 9151 Watertown MA 02471-9151 617-924-1770 f: 617-924-2286 jjennings@vhb.com www.vhb.com Contact: John Jennings	VHB provides an array of creative integrated transportation, land development and environmental services to support both public and private sector clients. We are experienced in infrastructure, commercial, educational, medical, industrial, recreational, and utility projects.
CODE CONSULTING	**Engineering Planning and Management, Inc. (EPM)** BSA Corporate Affiliate	20 Speen Street Framingham MA 01701 508-875-2121 f: 508-879-3291 thj@epm-inc.com www.epm-inc.com Contact: Thomas Jutras, PE	Building, fire and other specialty code consulting, development of performance based designs, development and support of compliance alternatives and appeals, third party reviews, fire protection engineering.
	Sullivan Code Group BSA Corporate Affiliate	343 Commercial Street Unit 302 Union Wharf Boston MA 02109 617-523-8227 f: 617-523-8016 pds@rwsullivan.com www.rwsullivan.com Contact: Paul D. Sullivan, PE, President	The Sullivan Code Group is a division within R.W. Sullivan, Inc. specializing in building code, zoning code, fire/life-safety code, and access code consulting as well as litigation and fire protection engineering, providing services throughout the US.
COMMISSIONING AUTHORITIES	**Environmental Health & Engineering, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	60 Wells Avenue Newton MA 02459-3210 800-825-5343 f: 617-964-8556 shore@eheinc.com www.eheinc.com Contact: David M. Shore	EH&E makes buildings work for you. We specialize in building systems commissioning, LEED building services, and indoor environmental assessments for organizations that want results.
COMPUTER SERVICES	**Consulting For Architects** BSA Corporate Affiliate	52 Broad Street Boston MA 02109-4301 800-413-4856 f: 617-261-0098 tgagliardi@cons4arch.com www.cons4arch.com Contact: Thomas Gagliardi	CFA is an authorized Autodesk Systems Center (ASC), discreet reseller, Authorized Training Center (ATC) and government specialist. Call us for a complimentary consultation to ensure that your hardware, software, and training programs are optimizing your investment.

Computer Services continued	**DTI Technologies, Inc.**	10 Commerce Park, Unit 10 Bedford NH 03110 800-370-2670 f: 603-626-7981 keastwood@dtitech.com www.dtitech.com Contact: Kelly Eastwood	DTI Technologies, Inc. is the leading solutions provider of computer-aided design (CAD) software and related technical services. Our expertise includes analyzing your CAD information and recommending solutions that incorporate the right software, hardware, training, CAD standards and other technical support services.
	Microdesk BSA Corporate Affiliate	460 Totten Pond Road, Suite 690 Waltham MA 02451 800-336-DESK (3375) f: 781-890-5275 team@microdesk.com www.microdesk.com Contact: Robin F. Adams	Technology consultants who work like architects — Microdesk is a Premier Autodesk Partner specializing in assisting the architectural community with maximizing their investment in CAD technology.
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT	**AMEC Construction Management, Inc.**	200 Lincoln Street, 4th floor Boston MA 02111 617-725-2788 f: 617-695-2211 Joseph.Bearak@AMEC.Com www.amec.com Contact: Joseph Bearak	AMEC, formerly known as Morse Diesel, is a recognized leader in the construction industry providing preconstruction, construction management and consulting services to virtually every segment of the construction market. We made our reputation as Morse Diesel, as AMEC, we will continue the tradition of keeping our client's interests first.
	Beacon Skanska, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	270 Congress Street Boston MA 02210-1037 617-574-1400 f: 617-574-1399 info@beacon-skanska.com www.beacon-skanska.com Contact: James D. Kolb	Beacon Skanska Inc. provides clients with construction management, general contracting, and program management services. Markets served include biotech/pharm, educational, and healthcare facilities, office and mixed-use buildings, and aviation, hotels and multi-unit residential projects.
	Bond Bros. Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	145 Spring Street, PO Box 26 Everett MA 02149-4517 617-387-3400 f: 617-389-1412 mpelletier@bondbros.com www.bondbrothers.com Contact: Marc Pelletier Director of Business Development	Bond Bros. Inc. is a 94-year old family-owned building, civil and utility construction firm serving the New England region. We provide preconstruction, construction management and general consulting services primarily to area colleges, as well as to commercial, health care, institutional, industrial, and utility sectors. We also construct infrastructure and complex civil and utility projects for institutional and energy industry clients. More than ninety percent of Bond Bros.' projects are for repeat clients. Our current projects range in value from several hundred thousand dollars to eighty-five million dollars.
	C.E. Floyd Company, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	9 DeAngelo Drive Bedford MA 01730-2200 781-271-9006 f: 781-271-9045 cfloyd@cefloyd.com www.cefloyd.com Contact: Charles E. Floyd	C.E. Floyd provides general contracting and construction management, preconstruction and design/build services for new construction, renovation and restoration projects in the areas of education, commercial, healthcare, assisted living, and laboratories and clean rooms. Our team works cooperatively with the architects and owners to fulfill the company's motto: Performance with Integrity.
	Chapman Construction/ Design, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	84 Winchester Street Newton MA 02461 617-630-8408 f: 617-630-8409 johnh@chap-con.com www.chap-con.com Contact: John C. Hall	With its commitment to excellence and focus on client service, Chapman Construction/Design engineers every project for value, working in cooperation with the architect to identify the most cost-effective materials and methods while never compromising the integrity of the design.
	Daniel O'Connell's Sons	135 Beaver Street Waltham MA 02452 781-642-0660 f: 781-642-0610 ktichacek@oconnells.com www.oconnells.com Contact: Kenneth C. Tichacek	Daniel O'Connell's Sons provides a full range of preconstruction planning and construction services. The firm specializes in renovation, restoration, and new building construction for corporate, educational, and institutional clients— with particular focus on projects which are technically complex or require exceptional management or engineering solutions.
	Erland Construction, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	83 Second Avenue Northwest Park Burlington MA 01803-4415 781-272-9440 f: 781-272-0601 dprince@erland.com www.erland.com Contact: Donna Prince	Erland Construction provides award-winning construction management services to academic, institutional, commercial, and high-tech clients. We offer a wide range of preconstruction and construction services involving new construction, renovations, tenant fit-ups, adaptive reuse, consolidations and modifications. Our advanced technology clients include biotech, pharmaceutical, semiconductor, computer, laboratory, healthcare, and chemical manufacturing industries.
	George B.H. Macomber Company BSA Corporate Affiliate	One Design Center Place Suite 600 Boston MA 02210-2327 617-478-6200 f: 617-478-2123 jth@gbhmacomber.com www.gbhmacomber.com Contact: John T. Henderson, President	Macomber is known for innovation, particularly in the use of technology to improve communication, project control, and efficiency. Services range from due diligence reports and estimating to general contracting and construction management.

Construction Management continued

Integrated Builders	1515 Washington Street Braintree MA 02184 781-356-3838 f: 781-356-3851 jdacey@integratedbuilders.com www.integratedbuilders.com Contact: Jay Dacey, President	Integrated Builders has furnished design/build and construction management services to discerning corporate clients, developers, retailers, and private institutions region wide for over a decade. Specialties include preconstruction and design services, ground-up commercial construction, property repositionings, tenant fit-up and extensive mechanical work.
Lee Kennedy Company, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	1792 Dorchester Avenue Dorchester MA 02124 617-825-6930 f: 617-265-0815 skennedy@leekennedy.com www.leekennedy.com Contact: Shaila Kennedy	Lee Kennedy Co., Inc. is a full-service firm providing preconstruction, general contracting and construction management services for new construction, renovations and restoration projects for the commercial, retail and institutional markets.
Marc Truant & Associates, Inc. BSA Member Firm	32 Warren Street Cambridge MA 02141-1015 617-868-8630 f: 617-868-1985 mtruant@mtruant.com www.mtruant.com Contact: Marc J. Truant AIA	Marc Truant Associates, Inc. provides preconstruction planning, construction management and general contracting services, specializing in complex adaptive reuse/renovation projects. Our interest in architecture and our collaborative approach have earned the company a reputation for excellence.
Richard White Sons, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	70 Rowe Street Auburndale MA 02466-1596 617-332-9500 f: 617-965-8868 jlmitchell@rwsons.com www.rwsons.com Contact: James L. Mitchell, III	Richard White Sons provides Construction Management, Preconstruction Planning, General Contracting and Site/Utility construction services to academic and institutional clients throughout New England.
Ryan Construction, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	505 South Street Walpole MA 02081 508-668-6788 f: 508-668-2455 rshields@ryanconstruction.com www.ryanconstruction.com Contact: Richard J. Shields, President	Ryan Construction's clients receive the highest level of professionalism for Construction Management/General Contracting services for construction/renovation of medical, educational and commercial projects. With a commitment to quality and focus on value, Ryan continues to develop customer relations based on mutual respect, integrity and dedication to their clients' goals and investments.
Shawmut Design and Construction BSA Corporate Affiliate	560 Harrison Avenue Boston MA 02118-2436 617-622-7000 f: 617-622-7001 mneil@shawmut.com www.shawmut.com Contact: Margaret R. Neil	Shawmut is a $350 million construction manager and general contractor serving clients nationally. Founded in 1982 and based in Boston, Shawmut has built its reputation by delivering outstanding client service. We provide pre-construction and construction management services for industry niches including academic, corporate, restaurant, retail, healthcare, and historic preservation.
Suffolk Construction Company, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	65 Allerton Street Boston MA 02119 617-517-4206 f: 617-517-4501 foneill@scci-bos.com www.suffolk-construction.com Contact: Fred O'Neill, Senior Vice President	Suffolk provides construction management, general contracting and design build services within the academic, hospitality, office, retail, high-tech, healthcare, multi-family residential, laboratory, bioscience and industrial sectors.
Tocci Building Corp. BSA Corporate Affiliate	660 Main Street Woburn MA 01801-8400 781-935-5500 f: 781-935-1888 actwest@tocci.com www.tocci.com Contact: Amy Thompson West	Tocci Building Corporation is an 80-year old construction management and design/build firm serving academic, corporate, lifestyle, healthcare, hospitality, multi-unit housing retail and senior living clients in the Northeast. The firm's award winning portfolio includes projects in the $1m–$50m range built to client requirements utilizing state-of-the-art project-specific solutions.
Vantage Builders, Inc.	89 Washington Avenue, Suite K Natick MA 01760 508-651-3183 f: 508-651-3184 jconnor@vantagebuildersinc.com www.vantagebuildersinc.com Contact: John Connor	Vantage Builders provides general contracting services to corporations, developers, property managers, retailers and private institutions throughout New England. Vantage Builders has more than fifteen years of experience managing and building commercial projects ranging from specialized tenant build-outs and standard property improvements to base building work and ground-up commercial construction.
William A. Berry & Son, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	100 Conifer Hill Drive Danvers MA 01923 978-774-1057 f: 978-739-4624 cmiller@berry.com www.berry.com Contact: Carolyn W. Miller	William A. Berry & Son, Inc. blends the spectrum of construction and management services from the early phases of project development through construction and building operations and maintenance.

Construction Management continued	**Wrenn Associates Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	32 Daniel Webster Highway Merrimack NH 03054-4816 603-883-7868 f: 603-883-4906 build@wrenn.com www.wrenn.com Contact: Sylvester M. Wrenn	Wrenn Associates is a general contractor/construction management firm that has provided construction services to the healthcare, commercial, institutional and industrial markets throughout New England since 1984. Wrenn is headquartered in Merrimack, New Hampshire and has branch offices in Boston, Massachusetts and Naples, Maine.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS	**RES Engineering, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	15 South Street, Suite A Hudson MA 01749 978-562-3538 f: 978-562-3604 info@resengineering.com www.resengineering.com Contact: John Abraham	RES provides full service mechanical, electrical (including fire alarm, teledata and security), and facility (IAQ, energy audits, LEED certification, and facility assessments) consulting services.
	Robert W. Sullivan, Inc. M/E/P/FP Engineers BSA Corporate Affiliate	343 Commercial Street, Unit 302 Union Wharf Boston MA 02109-1202 617-523-8227 f: 617-523-8016 pds@rwsullivan.com www.rwsullivan.com Contact: Paul D. Sullivan, PE, President	Robert W. Sullivan, Inc. provides full-service Plumbing, Fire Protection, HVAC and Electrical engineering as well as Code Consulting for commercial, industrial, institutional and residential projects.
	VHB/Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	101 Walnut Street PO Box 9151 Watertown MA 02471-9151 617-924-1770 f: 617-924-2286 jjennings@vhb.com www.vhb.com Contact: John Jennings	VHB provides an array of creative integrated transportation, land development and environmental services to support both public and private sector clients. We are experienced in infrastructure, commercial, educational, medical, industrial, recreational, and utility projects.
	Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.	333 North Avenue Wakefield MA 01880 781-213-9266 f: 781-213-9267 rwalther@wje.com www.wje.com Contact: Richard A. Walther, PE, SE	WJE is an interdisciplinary architectural, engineering, and materials science firm specializing in investigation, analysis, and design services for historic and contemporary buildings and structures.
CONTRACTORS	**Beacon Skanska, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	270 Congress Street Boston MA 02210-1037 617-574-1400 f: 617-574-1399 info@beacon-skanska.com www.beacon-skanska.com Contact: James D. Kolb	Beacon Skanska Inc. provides clients with construction management, general contracting, and program management services. Markets served include biotech/pharm, educational, and healthcare facilities, office and mixed-use buildings, and aviation, hotels and multi-unit residential projects.
	Chapman Construction/ Design, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	84 Winchester Street Newton MA 02461 617-630-8408 f: 617-630-8409 johnh@chap-con.com www.chap-con.com Contact: John C. Hall	A general contracting and construction management firm, Chapman Construction/Design has never missed a deadline. Known for fast-tracking build-outs in occupied spaces without compromising quality, Chapman counts corporations, institutions and retailers among its clients.
	Daniel O'Connell's Sons	135 Beaver Street Waltham MA 02452 781-642-0660 f: 781-642-0610 ktichacek@oconnells.com www.oconnells.com Contact: Kenneth C. Tichacek	Daniel O'Connell's Sons provides a full range of preconstruction planning and construction services. The firm specializes in renovation, restoration, and new building construction for corporate, educational, and institutional clients— with particular focus on projects which are technically complex or require exceptional management or engineering solutions.
	Integrated Builders	1515 Washington Street Braintree MA 02184 781-356-3838 f: 781-356-3851 jdacey@integratedbuilders.com www.integratedbuilders.com Contact: Jay Dacey, President	Integrated Builders has furnished design/build and construction management services to discerning corporate clients, developers, retailers, and private institutions region wide for over a decade. Specialties include preconstruction and design services, ground-up commercial construction, property repositionings, tenant fit-up and extensive mechanical work.
	Lee Kennedy Company, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	1792 Dorchester Avenue Dorchester MA 02124 617-825-6930 f: 617-265-0815 skennedy@leekennedy.com www.leekennedy.com Contact: Shaila Kennedy	Lee Kennedy Co., Inc. is a full service firm providing preconstruction, general contracting and construction management services for new construction, renovations and restoration projects for the commercial, retail and institutional markets.

Contractors continued	**Midland Construction Corporation** BSA Corporate Affiliate	12 Farnsworth Street Boston MA 02210 617-292-7882 f: 617-292-7984 sroche@midlandconstruction.com www.midlandconstruction.com Contact: Sean Roche Sr.	Midland is a full service general contractor specializing in pre-construction consulting, construction management and design/build services for corporate/commercial clients. Midland Construction is a Boston-based and family-owned company with an excellent reputation and known for its integrity, high-quality workmanship and customer service.
	Muckle & Associates BSA Corporate Affiliate	433 Market Street Lawrence MA 01843-1431 978-683-8700 f: 978-683-8778 suemuckle@muckleinc.com www.muckleinc.com Contact: Susan G. Muckle	Muckle & Associates, Inc. has been working in historical structures as a general contractor for twenty years, executing award-winning projects which preserve the architecture of the past while accommodating the demands of the present. The company offers preservation consulting, pre-construction services and construction management for institutional and corporate clients.
	Richard White Sons, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	70 Rowe Street Auburndale MA 02466-1596 617-332-9500 f: 617-965-8868 jlmitchell@rwsons.com www.rwsons.com Contact: James L. Mitchell, III	Richard White Sons provides Construction Management, Preconstruction Planning, General Contracting and Site/Utility construction services to academic and institutional clients throughout New England.
	Ryan Construction, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	505 South Street Walpole MA 02081 508-668-6788 f: 508-668-2455 rshields@ryanconstruction.com www.ryanconstruction.com Contact: Richard J. Shields, President	Ryan Construction's clients receive the highest level of professionalism for Construction Management/General Contracting services for construction/renovation of medical, educational and commercial projects. With a commitment to quality and focus on value, Ryan continues to develop customer relations based on mutual respect, integrity and dedication to their clients' goals and investments.
	Suffolk Construction Company, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	65 Allerton Street Boston MA 02119 617-517-4206 f: 617-517-4501 foneill@scci-bos.com www.suffolk-construction.com Contact: Fred O'Neill, Senior Vice President	Suffolk provides construction management, general contracting and design build services within the academic, hospitality, office, retail, high-tech, healthcare, multi-family residential, laboratory, bioscience and industrial sectors.
COPYING AND REPROGRAPHIC SERVICES	**Charrette ProGraphics/ Service Point** BSA Corporate Affiliate	31 Olympia Avenue Woburn MA 01801-2014 781-935-6000 f: 781-938-5251 hdeacon@servicepointusa.com www.servicepointusa.com Contact: Howard Deacon	Charrette ProGraphics/Service Point provides value-added reprographic services and document management tools to the professional design marketplace through its web site (www.servicepointusa.com) and over 240 On-Site Services (OSS) programs and twenty-one service centers in the United States, located in the Northeast, Mid Atlantic, and South.
	Strato Grafix	62 Middlesex Turnpike Burlington MA 01803 800-821-9948 f: 781-272-5940 stevec@stratografix.com www.stratografix.com Contact: Steve Chunias	Boston-Strato Grafix offers quality plan copying, presentation graphics, color copying, docutech and printing to the design and construction industry in its new Boston store. The new store is located at 63 Melcher Street in the Fort Point area. Strato Grafix, opened in 1969, has stores in Burlington and Woburn.
COST ESTIMATING	**Rider Hunt Levett & Bailey** BSA Corporate Affiliate	Union Wharf West, Suite 101 Boston MA 02109 617-737-9339 f: 617-737-0540 gbowen@riderhunt.com www.riderhunt.com Contact: Grant B. Owen, MRICS	Founded in England in 1785, and operating in Boston since 1985 (as Chartwell), Rider Hunt Levett & Bailey provides its clients with independent, unbiased, expert advice on all matters relating to the management of construction cost and time.
CUSTOM FURNITURE	**Charles Webb/CI Design**	51 McGrath Highway Somerville MA 02143 617-776-7100 f: 617-625-8550 cwebbinc@gte.net www.charleswebbcidesigns.com Contact: John Verdun	Manufacturers and designers of solid wood furniture and fully upholstered seating. Designs to fit residential, contract and corporate applications. Designs from mission oak to shaker cherry, on up to modern maple. Upholstery designs are available in C.O.M., or a choice of our selected fabrics. Customization of any of our designs is possible.
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING	**RES Engineering, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	15 South Street, Suite A Hudson MA 01749 978-562-3538 f: 978-562-3604 info@resengineering.com www.resengineering.com Contact: John Abraham	RES provides full service mechanical, electrical (including fire alarm, teledata and security), and facility (IAQ, energy audits, LEED certification, and facility assessments) consulting services.

ENERGY CONSULTING	**RES Engineering, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	15 South Street, Suite A Hudson MA 01749 978-562-3538 f: 978-562-3604 info@resengineering.com www.resengineering.com Contact: John Abraham	RES provides full service mechanical, electrical (including fire alarm, teledata and security), and facility (IAQ, energy audits, LEED certification, and facility assessments) consulting services.
ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHIC DESIGN/ GRAPHIC DESIGN	**Coco Raynes Associates, Inc.**	314 Dartmouth Street Boston MA 02116 617-536-5777 f: 617-536-9052 coco@raynesassociates.com www.raynesassociates.com Contact: Coco Raynes	Multidisciplinary design firm specializing in environmental graphics, signage and exhibits with emphasis on Universal Design. Services range from master plan and programming to conceptual design and supervision of installation. Projects include Black & Decker World Headquarters, National Museums in France and South America, Charles de Gaulle Airport. Woman-owned, SOMWBA Certified.
ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALISTS	**Environmental Compliance Services** BSA Corporate Affiliate	18 Shepherd Street Brighton MA 02135 617-782-4417 f: 617-254-5939 dauvine@ecsconsult.com www.ecsconsult.com Contact: Douglas Auvine	Since 1982 ECS has been providing architects and engineers with comprehensive site assessments, hazardous material surveys (i.e. asbestos, lead, PCB's, mercury, underground storage tanks), abatement and remediation design, monitoring, indoor air quality assessment (including mold), and more.
	Environmental Health & Engineering, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	60 Wells Avenue Newton MA 02459-3210 800-825-5343 f: 617-964-8556 dshore@eheinc.com www.eheinc.com Contact: David M. Shore	EH&E makes buildings work for you. We specialize in indoor environmental assessments, health risk studies, and building systems commissioning for organizations that want results.
	VHB/Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	101 Walnut Street PO Box 9151 Watertown MA 02471-9151 617-924-1770 f: 617-924-2286 jjennings@vhb.com www.vhb.com Contact: John Jennings	VHB provides an array of creative integrated transportation, land development and environmental services to support both public and private sector clients. We are experienced in environmental permitting support, hazardous waste mitigation, air quality analysis, environmental assessments, environmental impact statements, regulatory compliance, wetland mitigation, vegetation and wildlife studies, brownfields redevelopment, and environmental risk management.
EXISTING CONDITIONS SURVEYS	**Existing Conditions Surveys, Inc.**	132 West Concord Street, Suite 1 Boston MA 02118 617-247-9161 f: 617-249-0746 info@existingconditions.com www.existingconditions.com Contact: Kurt J. Yeghian	We provide architects and building professionals with low cost, high-quality building surveys and CAD drawings (pre-design packages) commercial/residential; free quote.
	Robert Megerdichian & Associates	50 Chilton Street Cambridge MA 02138-6802 617-547-1726 rma@cadcafmservices.com www.cadcafmservices.com Contact: Robert Megerdichian	As-built drawings of floor plans or building systems based on field measurements and/or existing paper drawings. Final drawings can be provided on disk or as CAD plots. Updating for facilities management purposes is available. References upon request. In business since 1990.
FACILITY MANAGEMENT	**William A. Berry & Son, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	100 Conifer Hill Drive Danvers MA 01923 978-774-1057 f: 978-739-4624 cmiller@berry.com www.berry.com Contact: Carolyn W. Miller	William A. Berry & Son, Inc. blends the spectrum of construction and management services from the early phases of project development through construction and building operations and maintenance.
FACILITY PROGRAMMING	**Planning/Programming/Design** BSA Member Firm	20 Windom Street Somerville MA 02144-3119 617-666-9222 f: 617-666-4557 maxwellarchitect@rcn.com Contact: Marc A. Maxwell AIA	Specializing in facility programming, space planning, user interviews, renovation design and project management. We collaborate with owners, developers and architects on corporate offices, assisted-living and community healthcare projects.
FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEERS	**Engineering Planning and Management, Inc. (EPM)** BSA Corporate Affiliate	20 Speen Street Framingham MA 01701 508-875-2121 f: 508-879-3291 thj@epm-inc.com www.epm-inc.com Contact: Thomas Jutras, PE	Fire protection system design by registered engineers, code consulting, fire modeling, hazards analysis, pre-fire plans, development and support of compliance alternatives and appeals, third party reviews.

FIRE STOPPING	**A.F. Underhill, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	PO Box 376, 55 North Street Canton MA 02021 781-828-9760 f: 781-828-6890 afunderhil@aol.com Contact: Robert N. LeClair, Jr.	A specialty contractor providing firestopping and fire containment insulation systems throughout New England. We have offered technical consulting and other services include building insulation, insulated panel construction, and retail interior construction.
FOOD SERVICES CONSULTANTS	**Colburn & Guyette Consulting Partners, Inc.**	1020 Plain Street, Suite 290 Marshfield MA 02050 800-343-3310 f: 781-834-0574 general@colburnguyette.com www.colburnguyette.com Contact: R. Todd Guyette, FCSI	Colburn & Guyette specializes in delivering the finest food facility planning and design services available by producing creative solutions to our clients' needs.
GENERAL CONTRACTORS	**Bufftree Building Company, Inc.**	193-R Pope's Island New Bedford MA 02740 508-997-5357 f: 508-997-3050 scottc@bufftree.com www.bufftree.com Contact: Scott W. Costa	Bufftree Building Company offers a full range of construction services in commercial, industrial, hospitality, multi-unit housing, restoration, retail, athletic, healthcare and institutional facilities. Bufftree is well known for its strong track record of completing complex renovations and additions with a minimum of inconvenience to operating businesses. "21st Century Know-How Built on a Strong Work Ethic."
	Caron Building Corporation	5 Waushakum Avenue Ashland MA 01721 508-820-9966 f: 508-820-9977 koneil@caronbuilding.com www.caronbuilding.com Contact: Kenneth W. O'Neil, President	Caron Building Corporation is a full service construction firm providing preconstruction planning, general contracting and construction management services. We have completed projects in the retail, medical, biotech, office, telecommunications, luxury residential and historical restoration fields.
	D.F. Pray General Contractors BSA Corporate Affiliate	27 Christina Street Newton MA 02461 617-443-0005 f: 617-443-0022 swpray@dfpray.com www.dfpray.com Contact: Scott W. Pray, President	D.F. Pray General Contractors has been delivering first-rate service to its customers since 1959. Our portfolio includes commercial and industrial facilities, schools and other public sector work, tenant improvements, and retail. Offices are in Seekonk and Newton, MA and Hartford, CT. For more information, visit us at www.dfpray.com
	George B.H. Macomber Company BSA Corporate Affiliate	One Design Center Place Suite 600 Boston MA 02210-2327 617-478-6200 f: 617-478-2123 jth@gbhmacomber.com www.gbhmacomber.com Contact: John T. Henderson, President	Macomber is known for innovation, particularly in the use of technology to improve communication, project control, and efficiency. Services range from due diligence reports and estimating to general contracting and construction management.
	Gustafson Construction, Inc.	28 Teal Road Wakefield MA 01880 781-246-1800 f: 781-246-3022 eric_gustafson@gustafsongc.com www.gustafsongc.com Contact: Eric Gustafson	Gustafson Construction provides general contracting services for the corporate, educational, retail and institutional sectors. We are committed to providing our clients with fine craftsmanship, technically sound construction and exceptional service.
	Shawmut Design and Construction BSA Corporate Affiliate	560 Harrison Avenue Boston MA 02118-2436 617-622-7000 f: 617-622-7001 mneil@shawmut.com www.shawmut.com Contact: Margaret R. Neil	Shawmut is a $350 million construction manager and general contractor serving clients nationally. Founded in 1982 and based in Boston, Shawmut has built its reputation by delivering outstanding client service. We provide pre-construction and construction management services for industry niches including academic, corporate, restaurant, retail, healthcare, and historic preservation.
HISTORIC RESTORATION	**Muckle & Associates** BSA Corporate Affiliate	433 Market Street Lawrence MA 01843-1431 978-683-8700 f: 978-683-8778 suemuckle@muckleinc.com www.muckleinc.com Contact: Susan G. Muckle	Muckle & Associates, Inc. has been working in historical structures as a general contractor for twenty years, executing award-winning projects which preserve the architecture of the past while accommodating the demands of the present. The company offers preservation consulting, pre-construction services and construction management for institutional and corporate clients.
	Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.	333 North Avenue Wakefield MA 01880 781-213-9266 f: 781-213-9267 rwalther@wje.com www.wje.com Contact: Richard A. Walther, PE, SE	WJE is an interdisciplinary architectural, engineering, and materials science firm specializing in investigation, analysis, and design services for historic and contemporary buildings and structures.

HOME THEATER	**Media Systems** BSA Corporate Affiliate	One Design Center Place, Suite 644 Boston MA 02210-2313 617-439-7004 f: 617-737-8719 info@mediasystems.com www.mediasystems.com Contact: Mitchell Klein	Media Systems is New England's very best systems integration firm, winning over 15 prestigious national awards in just the past five years! Media Systems continues to be the industry leader and innovator, always building on their previous successes, providing outstanding service and spectacular systems for homes and businesses.
IAQ CONSULTING	**Turner Building Science, LLC**	26 Pinewood Lane Harrison ME 04040 207-583-4571 f: 207-583-4572 bturner@hlturner.com www.turnerbuildingscience.com Contact: William A. Turner, PE	Mechanical engineers and building scientists. Services include IAQ/HVAC/ industrial hygiene services; evaluation of control technology; building diagnostics; system design research; HVAC system commissioning; and training.
INSURANCE	**Poole Professional Ltd.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	401 Edgewater Place Suite 180 Wakefield MA 01880-6210 781-245-5400 f: 781-245-5463 cpoole@poolepl.com www.poolepl.com Contact: Christopher A. Poole	Poole Professional Ltd. provides insurance and risk management services to the design community. Pro-active loss prevention, claims advocacy, and contract review, makes us the choice for over 650 design professionals.
IT CONSULTING	**Miller Systems, Inc.**	585 Boylston Street, 3rd Floor Boston MA 02116 617-266-4200 f: 617-266-4449 soren@millersystems.com www.millersystems.com Contact: Soren Ryherd	Miller Systems provides proactive and effective IT consulting and implementation services to Greater Boston area organizations that need reliable performance from their IT infrastructure in order to succeed. Miller Systems has a seven-year track record providing ongoing IT support and consulting to Boston area organizations and was recently named to the Inc 500.
KITCHEN AND BATH DESIGN	**Arclinea Boston** BSA Corporate Affiliate	2014 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge MA 02140 617-876-9888 f: 617-876-1050 info@arclineaboston.com www.arclineaboston.com Contact: Philip Guarino	New England showroom of Italian kitchens by Arclinea, designed and coordinated by the acclaimed Italian architect Antonio Citterio.
	Water & Fire, LLC BSA Corporate Affiliate	38 Crafts Street Newton MA 02458 866-EUROBATH f: 617-559-0522 paulh@waterandfire.com www.waterandfire.net Contact: Paul Hatziiliades	European kitchen and bath suppliers, offering Boston's only true custom European kitchen aimed at architects and their clients. The Newton showroom offers kitchen and bath furniture, a complete tile and stone showroom, and live kitchen displays with the latest in gourmet cooking appliances.
LAND SURVEYORS	**Allen & Major Associates, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	100 Commerce Way PO Box 2118 Woburn MA 01888-0118 781-935-6889 f: 781-935-2896 kkiernan@allenmajor.com www.allenmajor.com Contact: Kevin J. Kiernan, PLS	Allen & Major Associates, Inc. specializes in civil and structural engineering, land surveying, and environmental consulting. We have 30 years of expertise to assist clients with as-builts, construction layout, wetland locating, and topographic surveys.
	Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	186 Lincoln Street, Suite 200 Boston MA 02111-2403 617-338-0063 f: 617-338-6472 jnei@jnei.com www.jnei.com Contact: Lori L. Chicoyne	A civil engineering, land surveying, and planning firm founded in 1989 to meet the needs of private development and public infrastructure projects. WBE certified firm.
	Merrimack Engineering Services, Inc.	66 Park Street Andover MA 01810 978-475-3555 f: 978-475-1448 merreng@aol.com www.merrimackengineering.com Contact: Stephen Stapinski	Merrimack Engineering Services, Inc. provides topographic, property line, land court, construction layout and control surveys, GPS and aerial mapping, easement plans and ALTA surveys. The firm uses the latest electronic field equipment and produces all plans in electronic format.
	VHB/Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	101 Walnut Street PO Box 9151 Watertown MA 02471-9151 617-924-1770 f: 617-924-2286 jjennings@vhb.com www.vhb.com Contact: John Jennings	VHB survey services include: boundary line determinations, topographic surveys, geodetic control surveys, GIS services, global positioning surveys (GPS), and aerial mapping projects.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING	**Copley Wolff Design Group** BSA Corporate Affiliate	160 Boylston Street, 4th Floor Boston MA 02116 617-654-9000 f: 617-654-9002 nleblanc@copley-wolff.com Contact: Nicole LeBlanc, Marketing Director	CWDG offers full landscape architectural and planning services, specializing in public open spaces and community-based design, public art integration, campus master planning, and historic landscapes. Recent projects include: Central Artery/Tunnel surface restoration; First Church of Christ, Scientist fountain restoration; Boston Common Tadpole Playground; and Montshire Museum of Science's Science Park.
	VHB/Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	101 Walnut Street PO Box 9151 Watertown MA 02471-9151 617-924-1770 f: 617-924-2286 jjennings@vhb.com www.vhb.com Contact: John Jennings	VHB's Planning, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design Group specializes in providing land planning, landscape architecture, urban design, site/civil engineering, transportation planning, land survey, environmental permitting, brownfields redevelopment, environmental risk management, air/noise quality analysis, and construction services.
	ZEN Associates Inc.	124 Boston Post Road Sudbury MA 01776 978-443-6222 f: 978-443-0368 sabe@zenassociates.com www.zenassociates.com Contact: Shinichiro Abe	ZEN Associates is a Landscape Architectural firm providing design/build services with offices in the Boston and D.C. areas. Our services include site planning, design, construction and management. Our clients include Architects, builders, homeowners, and private institutions. For a sample of our portfolio, please visit our web site.
LEGAL SERVICES	**The Heuer Law Group** BSA Member Firm	124 Mt. Auburn Street Suite 200N Cambridge MA 02138-5758 617-628-5290 f: 617-628-8192 heuerlaw@aol.com heuerlaw.com Contact: Charles R. Heuer FAIA	Our practice concentrates on the design and construction industry exclusively. We focus on contract preparation/review, risk management and general business law for design professionals.
LIGHTING DESIGN	**LUX Lighting Design**	170 Needham Street, Suite 2 Newton MA 02464 617-243-0014 f: 617-243-0018 dmadden@luxlightingdesign.com www.luxlightingdesign.com Contact: Doreen Le May Madden, LC,CLC, IESNA	Lighting to reveal and enhance architectural space. NCQLP certified; award-winning lighting design for commercial and residential projects. Astute insight into spatial needs; extensive lighting and controls product knowledge. Numerous references available.
MAILROOM CONSULTANTS	**Design Advantage** BSA Corporate Affiliate	317 Fairmount Avenue Milton MA 02186-1309 617-364-7719 f: 617-364-3839 designadvantage@pobox.com www.designadvantage.net Contact: Kathy Simpson	Providing design services and furniture for: mail centers; copy centers; computer centers; command centers; and literature storage areas. Careful work-flow analysis, CAD designs, and Hamilton Sorter modular furniture combine to create efficient and ergonomic work environments. Hamilton Sorter modular furniture has a lifetime warranty!
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS	**BSA Partnering & Organizational Management Service**	c/o Gathering Pace 28 Gould Road Bedford MA 01730 781-275-2424 f: 781-275-2424 wronco@gatheringpace.com Contact: William C. Ronco	Partnering and other organizational-management opportunities/issues are the focus of this BSA service provided by teambuilding expert/author Bill Ronco.
MARKETING	**Littlefield Associates**	25 Morton Street Waltham MA 02453 781-893-1082 maryrl@attbi.com Contact: Mary Littlefield	Need help creating winning proposals, presentations, collateral materials? Two of the best independent proposal/presentation managers/writers/designers in New England. Mary Littlefield, maryrl@attbi.com Rob Hurst, robhurst@attbi.com
MASONRY	**Clayton Block Company, Inc.**	PO Box 3015 515 Rt. 528 Lakewood NJ 08701 732-905-3146 f: 732-367-9473 www.claytonco.com Contact: Kathy Roe, CSI, Director of Marketing	Manufacturers of concrete masonry units, architectural polished face, ground face, split face and Spectra Glaze II masonry units. Clayton Block supplies the full line of products related to the masonry industry.
	Eastern Exterior Wall Systems, Inc.	203 Concord Street, Suite 203 Pawtucket RI 02860 401-724-2277 f: 401-724-6668 mlambrese@eews.com www.eews.com Contact: Michael J. Lambrese	We are a manufacturer of engineered panelized wall systems. Systems include brick, granite, composite metal, GFRC, and EIFS.

Masonry continued	**New England Concrete Masonry Association** BSA Corporate Affiliate	PO Box 448 Manchaug MA 01526 508-476-3466 f: 508-476-3467 dimmick@necma.com www.necma.com Contact: David L. Dimmick	NECMA promotes the use of concrete masonry and landscape products as the preferred building and landscaping system through education, innovation, and technical support. We offer training programs and educational seminars that qualify for AIA credit, available at your office, as well as technical assistance and support materials.
MECHANICAL ENGINEERS	**RES Engineering, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	15 South Street, Suite A Hudson MA 01749 978-562-3538 f: 978-562-3604 info@resengineering.com www.resengineering.com Contact: John Abraham	RES provides full service mechanical, electrical (including fire alarm, teledata and security), and facility (IAQ, energy audits, LEED certification, and facility assessments) consulting services.
METAL FABRICATORS	**Eastern Exterior Wall Systems, Inc.**	203 Concord Street, Suite 203 Pawtucket RI 02860 401-724-2277 f: 401-724-6668 mlambrese@eews.com www.eews.com Contact: Michael J. Lambrese	We are a manufacturer of engineered panelized wall systems. Systems include brick, granite, composite metal, GFRC, and EIFS.
MURALISTS	**Jeph Ellis Murals**	PO Box 19 Beverly MA 01915 978-969-1031 f: 978-969-1032 jephellis@attbi.com Contact: Jeph Ellis	Custom, interpretative, fine art murals for interior or exterior, residential or commercial applications. Complete project management. Comprehensive research and a studied approach to design and color. This rare approach to murals elevates and distinguishes each assignment, yielding artwork that both inspires and visually stimulates.
PLACEMENT SERVICES	**Consulting For Architects** BSA Corporate Affiliate	52 Broad Street Boston MA 02109-4301 800-413-4856 f: 617-261-0098 dmullen@cons4arch.com www.cons4arch.com Contact: Donna C. Mullen	CFA is the only full-service consulting firm to the A/E/C Industry, specializing in smart, efficient and cost effective job placement and CAD services. Call CFA today to learn about our job placement options: temporary, temp-to-perm and perm.
PLAY AREA MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT	**M. E. O'Brien & Sons, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	PO Box 650 93 West Street Medfield MA 02052-0003 508-359-4200 f: 508-359-2817 mail@obrienandsons.com www.obrienandsons.com Contact: Eric W. O'Brien	O'Brien & Sons is New England's oldest and largest manufacturer's representative of park and playground equipment as well as various site amenities including park benches, picnic tables, tree grates, drinking fountains, and park shelters.
PLUMBING ENGINEERS	**RES Engineering, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	15 South Street, Suite A Hudson MA 01749 978-562-3538 f: 978-562-3604 info@resengineering.com www.resengineering.com Contact: John Abraham	RES provides full service mechanical, electrical (including fire alarm, teledata and security), and facility (IAQ, energy audits, LEED certification, and facility assessments) consulting services.
POST AND BEAM CONSTRUCTION	**Timberpeg East, Inc.**	PO Box 1500 Claremont NH 03743 603-542-7762 f: 603-542-8925 info@timberpeg.com www.timberpeg.com Contact: Bob Britton	Timberpeg is a leading manufacturer of pre-cut post and beam structures featuring mortise and tenon joinery. From small vacation homes to large commercial buildings and custom tresses Timberpeg can assist you in creating timber framed structures for your projects using the latest CAD/CAM design and manufacturing technology.
PRECAST BUILDING COMPONENTS	**Eastern Exterior Wall Systems, Inc.**	203 Concord Street, Suite 203 Pawtucket RI 02860 401-724-2277 f: 401-724-6668 mlambrese@eews.com www.eews.com Contact: Michael J. Lambrese	We are a manufacturer of engineered panelized wall systems. Systems include brick, granite, composite metal, GFRC, and EIFS.
	Oldcastle Precast, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	Building Systems Division 123 County Route 101 PO Box 218 South Bethlehem NY 12161 518-767-2269 f: 518-767-9390 john.jones@oldcastleprecast.com www.oldcastleprecast.com Contact: John W. Jones	The Oldcastle Precast Building Systems Division is designed to manufacture prestressed hollowcore planks as well as a variety of complementary structural precast concrete products. The company currently has six manufacturing facilities located in NY, PA and MD. Oldcastle Precast, Inc. also provides concept design assistance, engineering, and erection services for precast projects.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	**Beacon Skanska, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	270 Congress Street Boston MA 02210-1037 617-574-1400 f: 617-574-1399 info@beacon-skanska.com www.beacon-skanska.com Contact: James D. Kolb	Beacon Skanska Inc. provides clients with construction management, general contracting, and program management services. Markets served include biotech/pharm, educational, and healthcare facilities, office and mixed-use buildings, and aviation, hotels and multi-unit residential projects.
	PMA Consultants LLC	Braintree Hill Office Park 25 Braintree Hill Park, Suite 303 Braintree MA 02184 781-794-1404 f: 781-794-1405 Contact: Gary Jentzen, PE, JD	PMA Consultants LLC is a project, program, and construction management consulting form, with 14 offices nationwide. Since 1971, PMA has provided specialty expertise on architectural, heavy civil, and manufacturing projects exceeding $80 billion. PMA was recently ranked 36th largest CM firm for fee in the U.S. by ENR.
	William A. Berry & Son, Inc. BSA Corporate Affiliate	100 Conifer Hill Drive Danvers MA 01923 978-774-1057 f: 978-739-4624 cmiller@berry.com www.berry.com Contact: Carolyn W. Miller	William A. Berry & Son, Inc. blends the spectrum of construction and management services from the early phases of project development through construction and building operations and maintenance.
ROOFING	**Sarnafil, Inc.**	225 Dan Road Canton MA 02021-2898 800-451-2504 f: 781-821-9205 lisa.jones@sarnafilus.com www.sarnafilus.com Contact: Lisa Jones	Sarnafil is an industrial manufacturer of high quality, single ply roofing and waterproofing membranes. With over 38 years of experience, Sarnafil's roofing and waterproofing systems are recognized for their ability to withstand the test of time. We service our customers by providing beneficial support in the form of comprehensive design review and technical advice during construction.
SECURITY CONSULTING	**Howard Services Security Consulting**	14 Lower East Central St. Franklin MA 02038 508-520-1500 f: 508-520-1992 info@howardservices.com www.expertsecurity.com Contact: Howard Levinson, CPP	Independent security consultation and system design of CCTV, access control, intrusion detection/alarms. Creation of RFP's and specifications, project management, CPTED support to architects, security surveys/risk assessments.
SPECIFICATIONS SERVICES	**Essex Industries**	24 Whitehall Road Amesbury MA 01913 978-388-8593 f: 978-388-4689 wlawliss@essexopenings.com www.essexopenings.com Contact: William Lawliss	Manufacturers' representative for Curries (hollow metal), Graham (flush wood doors), HES (electric strikes), Sargent (architectural hardware), and Securitron (electronic hardware). Provide education, information, and specification service to architectural and specification firms.
	Kalin Associates Inc. BSA Member Firm	154 Wells Avenue Newton Center MA 02459 617-964-5477 f: 617-964-5788 mkalin@kalinassociates.com www.kalinassociates.com Contact: Mark J. Kalin, FCSI, FAIA	Preparation of construction specifications for public and private projects; development of corporate guide specifications; publishers of Master Short-Form Specifications; project specific GreenSpecs and LEED documentation.
STONE AND TILE INSTALLATION	**KRC Marble & Granite Contractors, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	69 Norman Street, Unit 11A Everett MA 02149 617-387-0066 f: 617-387-1736 krcmarble@aol.com Contact: Rick Hickey	KRC specializes in high-end residential installation of interior stone of all kinds as well as ceramic, glass and mosaic tile. Complete package of tile and slab can be provided.
STONE AND TILE SUPPLIERS	**Marble and Granite, Inc.**	270 University Avenue Westwood MA 02090-2309 781-407-9560 f: 781-407-9580 info@marbleandgranite.com www.marbleandgranite.com Contact: Gian Luca Fiori	Quartz Stone by Caesarstone is nature's answer to your countertop needs. By choosing a Quartz Stone countertop, you're choosing a surface that is durable, maintenance free and stronger than stone.
	Plymouth Quarries BSA Corporate Affiliate	410 Whiting Street Hingham, MA 02043 781-335-3686 f: 781-340-0313 jpdev@plymouthquarries.com www.plymouthquarries.com Contact: Jon P. Devine	Complete supplier and fabricator of natural stone products including: Indiana limestone, granite, bluestone, brownstone, slate, veneer stone, wall stone, and paving stone. Specializing in residential and commercial work. Quarrier of Weymouth seamface and splitface granite used at Boston College, Yale University and many other projects throughout the Northeast.

Stone and Tile Suppliers continued	**Stone Source**	215 Park Avenue South, Suite 700 New York NY 10003 212-979-6400 f: 212-979-6989 info@stonesource.com www.stonesource.com Contact: Jeff Green	Stone Source is an importer and distributor of natural stone, ceramic tile, and decorative surfaces, with show rooms in NYC, Washington DC, Boston, and a sales office in Philadelphia. We maintain a large inventory of distinctive materials that will satisfy the demands of the most sophisticated professional architects and designers.
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS	**Allen & Major Associates, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	100 Commerce Way PO Box 2118 Woburn MA 01888-0118 781-935-6889 f: 781-935-2896 mguilmet@allenmajor.com www.allenmajor.com Contact: Michael R. Guilmet, PE	Allen & Major Associates, Inc. specializes in civil and structural engineering, land surveying, and environmental consulting. We have 30 years of expertise to assist clients with structural investigation, construction engineering, and industrial structures.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS/ TECHNOLOGY	**Acentech Incorporated** BSA Corporate Affiliate	33 Moulton Street Cambridge MA 02138-1118 617-499-8000 f: 617-499-8074 crosenberg@acentech.com www.acentech.com Contact: Carl J. Rosenberg	Acentech's staff of more than 35 consultants provides services in architectural acoustics, noise and vibration control, and the design of sound, audiovisual, and sound masking systems. For more than 50 years architects and engineers have turned to our professionals for comprehensive consulting services for corporations, schools, laboratories, performance halls and more.
	Microdesk BSA Corporate Affiliate	460 Totten Pond Road, Suite 690 Waltham MA 02451 800-336-DESK (3375) f: 781-890-5275 team@microdesk.com www.microdesk.com Contact: Robin F. Adams	Technology consultants who work like architects — Microdesk is a Premier Autodesk Partner specializing in assisting the architectural community with maximizing their investment in CAD technology.
TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERS	**VHB/Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	101 Walnut Street PO Box 9151 Watertown MA 02471-9151 617-924-1770 f: 617-924-2286 jjennings@vhb.com www.vhb.com Contact: John Jennings	VHB provides an array of creative integrated transportation, and development and environmental services to support both public and private sector clients. We specialize in transportation engineering and planning services that include highway/roadway design, traffic impact studies, parking planning and design, traffic demand management, and airport, transit and rail facilities.
WATERPROOFING	**Sarnafil, Inc.**	225 Dan Road Canton MA 02021-2898 800-451-2504 f: 781-821-9205 lisa.jones@sarnafilus.com www.sarnafilus.com Contact: Lisa Jones	Sarnafil is an industrial manufacturer of high quality, single ply roofing and waterproofing membranes. With over 38 years of experience, Sarnafil's roofing and waterproofing systems are recognized for their ability to withstand the test of time. We service our customers by providing beneficial support in the form of comprehensive design review and technical advice during construction.
WEB DESIGN/ DEVELOPMENT	**Miller Systems, Inc.**	585 Boylston Street, 3rd Floor Boston MA 02116 617-266-4200 f: 617-266-4449 soren@millersystems.com www.millersystems.com Contact: Soren Ryherd	Miller Systems provides an award-winning blend of engineering, technology consulting, and creative services that support clients' strategic business objectives and deliver significant return on investment. Recently named to the Inc 500, the company's holistic, integrated approach allows the company to cross traditional boundaries, providing expertise and accountability during the entire lifecycle of interactive engagements.
WINDOWS AND DOORS	**Diamond Windows & Doors Mfg. Inc.**	99 East Cottage Street Boston MA 02125 617-282-1688 www.diamondwindows.com Contact: Patrick Tseng	Diamond Windows & Doors manufactures vinyl and aluminum windows and doors for the residential and commercial markets.
	EFCO Corporation	1000 Country Road Monett MO 65708 417-235-3193 f: 417-235-7313 mwoodrum@efcocorp.com www.efcocorp.com Contact: Mike Woodrum	Manufacturer of windows, curtain walls, entrances and storefronts.
	Marvin Windows and Doors/ A.W. Hastings BSA Corporate Affiliate	2 Pearson Way Enfield CT 06082 800-394-2728 f: 800-966-2732 jboyle@awhastings.com www.awhastings.com Contact: John Boyle	Your Marvin and Integrity windows and door specialists, providing an elevated level of collaboration and copious options for your window and door designs and specifications.

Windows and Doors continued	**Muckle & Associates, Inc.** BSA Corporate Affiliate	433 Market Street Lawrence MA 01843-1431 978-683-8700 f: 978-683-8778 richmuckle@muckleinc.com www.muckleinc.com Contact: Richard A. Muckle	Restoration or replication of historical wood, metal clad and metal windows and doors. Services include complete condition assessment, detailed window schedules, door schedules and repair methodologies. Product recommendations for sash and frames, glass and glazing, insulated glass, art glass, radius glass, bronze weatherstripping, hardware, screens, storms, protective glazing, closures.
	North Atlantic Corp.	1255 B GAR Highway Somerset MA 02726-1294 508-235-4261 f: 508-235-4430 mcurley@northatlanticcorp.com www.northatlanticcorp.com Contact: Matthew Curley	North Atlantic Corp. (NAC), New England's distributor of Kolbe & Kolbe Windows and Doors. NAC manufactures custom staircases, windows, doors, and architectural millwork. Product is sold to lumberyards in Northeast through NAMCO (www.namco1.com) and builders in MA and RI through Horner Millwork (www.hornermillwork.com). Architects are served through NAC's Architectural Services Group.
	Pella Windows & Doors, Inc. of Boston BSA Corporate Affiliate	45 Fondi Road Haverhill MA 01832 978-373-2500 f: 978-521-9161 dhadley@pellaboston.com www.boston.pella.com Contact: David Hadley	We provide full service fenestration consulting on residential and commercial projects, including product presentations, factory trips, CEU credits and project management.
WOODWORKING	**Kenyon Woodworking, Inc.**	179 Boylston Street Jamaica Plain MA 02130 617-524-6883 x204 f: 617-524-6866 kenyon@kenyonwoodworking.com www.kenyonwoodworking.com Contact: David S. Kenyon	Architectural woodworking and custom cabinetry.
	Kochman Reidt + Haigh Cabinetmakers BSA Corporate Affiliate	471 Page Street Stoughton MA 02072 781-341-4313 f: 781-341-4316 paul@cabinetmakers.com www.cabinetmakers.com Contact: Paul Reidt	As cabinetmakers with an appreciation for design, KR+H is mindful of all aspects of your plan. We pay close attention to proportions, details, and finishes. Our work is mainly through referral by architects, designers, builders, and homeowners. Visit our website to see residential projects, published work, and a shop tour.

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Building industry consultants, contractors, and manufacturers interested in being included in the Guide are urged to consult the BSA Web site at www.architects.org/guide or call/e-mail Brian Keefe at 781-335-4072/bkeefe@tradeshowmgmt.com.

For questions about existing ads or for help using the online Guide account manager, please call/e-mail Kate Gilbert Miller at 617-951-1433x234/ kmiller@architects.org.

Special Awards

Every year, BSA members and their colleagues are honored nationally for their contributions to design, to our profession, and to the communities we serve. During 2002, such recognition included:

AIA Honor Award for Architecture
Straitsview Farm, Washington State
Charles Rose Architects
(formerly Thompson & Rose)
Somerville, Massachusetts

AIA Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design
A Vision Plan for Pittsburgh's Waterfront
Chan Krieger & Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Associate architect:
Urban Instruments/Wellington Reiter AIA
Newton, Massachusetts

AIA 25-Year Award
Fundació Joan Miró
Barcelona
Sert Jackson & Associates

AIA Topaz Medallion for Excellence in Architectural Education
Jerzy Soltan

AIA Intern Development Program Firm of the Year
Payette Associates
Boston

AIA Distinguished Service Award
Nancy Jenner

Elevated to AIA College of Fellows
W. Lewis Barlow IV, FAIA
Paul Donnelly PE/FAIA
Imre Halasz FAIA
Jonathan Levi FAIA

Each year, the BSA also identifies architects, colleagues, and institutions deserving special recognition for their contributions to our architectural community and to the enrichment of our built and natural environments. In 2002, the BSA conferred these honors:

BSA Award of Honor
Charles Redmon FAIA

Commonwealth Award
Historic Neighborhoods Foundation

BSA Preservation Award
Robert G. Neiley AIA

BSA Women in Design Award of Excellence
Barbara Boylan AIA
Joan Goody FAIA
Sharon Matthews AIA
Lloy Hack (posthumously)

BSA Fellows Award for Excellence in Teaching
Michael R. Davis AIA

AIA Massachusetts/BSA Legislator of the Year
State Senator Marc Pacheco

Urban Visionary Citation
The Honorable Thomas Menino

Honorary BSA
Justine Liff, Hon. BSA

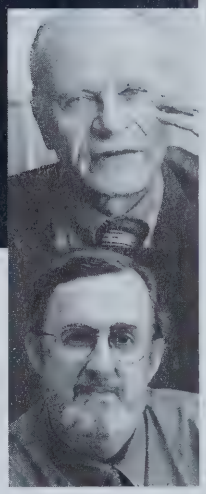
1
Strathmore Farm
Washington State
Thorne River Architects

2
Fundación Joan Miró
Barcelona
Josep Lluís Sert & Associates

3
A Vision Plan for Pittsburgh's
Waterfront
Edaw Design & Associates
[illegible]

3
Jerry Erickson
Harvard Graduate School
of Design

4
Thomas Emmons Hall
Cambridge Sewer Commission



25 Years Ago…

The 1977 Harleston Parker Medal
Quincy Market
Faneuil Hall Marketplace

Benjamin Thompson and Associates

Photos © Steve Rosenthal

The Harleston Parker Medal, Boston's most prestigious architecture award, was established in 1921 to recognize "the most beautiful piece of architecture, building, monument, or structure within the limits of the City of Boston or of the Metropolitan Parks District."

Twenty-five years ago, the Parker Medal jury chose to honor the renovation of Quincy Market, commenting: "Although the Committee recognizes that Quincy Market combines the vision of many people, we feel that the firm of Benjamin Thompson and Associates richly deserves the medal, not only for its outstanding architectural solution, but also for the significant part that they played, with others, in making Quincy Market a reality, and thus furthering the revitalization of the New Boston."

The jury's emphasis on the contributions of others was both noteworthy and well-placed, as was its recognition of the architect's remarkable vision. Honoring Quincy Market only a year after its completion, the jury did not yet know the extraordinary influence this project would have on commercial and urban development around the world.

The winner of the 2002 Harleston Parker Medal is the Multi-Faith Spiritual Center at Northeastern University by Office dA (see page 35).

1977 Harleston Parker Jury

Joseph Maybank FAIA, chair
John M. Clancy FAIA
James H. Crissman FAIA
Maria Teresa Cruz-Garcia
Marilyn Fraser AIA
Ronald Gourley FAIA
Robert Kramer FAIA
Paul Henry Krueger AIA
Kenneth Krueger AIA
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ArchitectureBoston

March/April 2003

Land

Who knew? Who knew that the seemingly placid world of landscape architecture crackles with controversy? That its practitioners form factions hurling invective at one another? (Well, maybe not invective. Landscape architects do tend to be a good-natured lot. They're more likely to hurl expressions of extreme exasperation.)

Who knew? Chances are, not architects. Many architects are woefully ignorant of the world their landscape siblings inhabit and, worse still, they don't know that they're ignorant. Architects get a token dose of landscape education — perhaps a history course, maybe a plant class, possibly a few site-planning exercises. The assumption is that they will learn enough to be able to communicate effectively with the consultants they will someday hire (no matter that these "consultants" might well be in the position of hiring architects). But there is a difference between developing a common language, a design Esperanto, and understanding a culture with a distinct point of view.

The problem is that most architects don't recognize that landscape architecture does offer a distinct point of view, one that is often the inverse of architecture. Designers in both fields study figure-ground drawings, where buildings are shown in white and the spaces between are rendered black, in order to force the eye and mind to see space as a positive attribute. But architects nearly always revert to their building-centric ways. Landscape architects keep their focus on the space.

That focus on space leads to interesting distinctions. Architects, by definition, are manipulators of the built environment. Landscape architects work with gradations of the natural environment, from untouched land, to landscapes that strive to resemble the untouched, to the obviously designed, to the artful expression, to outright artifice. Architects sometimes speak of "time" as a shorthand for the experience of moving through a building. Landscape architects use a more conventional definition; it can take years for a landscape to achieve its designer's intention. A landscape can quite literally have a life of its own; untended, it can grow in unwanted, even unexpected, ways.

But if landscape architects must have a greater measure of patience than architects, they must also have thicker skins. Their work is judged daily, and the results can be painfully clear. As Marion Pressley FASLA notes, the public votes with its feet. A vacant park is eloquent testimony to failure. The occupants of a badly designed building are rarely given the opportunity to simply abandon it in favor of a more appealing venue.

Despite their differences, architects and landscape architects share a good deal — personal commitment to improving the world around us and an abiding sense of civic responsibility. They struggle with debates about similar issues: balancing respect for history with the need for contemporary expression; encouraging more informed public debate about design; nurturing the next generation of designers. Both disciplines could benefit from more dialogue and more joint endeavors.

And architects just might find that in learning more about the landscape architecture profession, they learn more about their own.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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Letters

For the first time in my life, (I have been a practicing architect in New York City for 24 years), I read an architectural magazine and actually enjoyed reading every single article. The roundtable discussion, "Buzz Cuts," [November/December 2002] was informative, intelligent, and highly entertaining. While I agree with all the nominations for over-hyped people/ideas/things (except for "The Anna Nicole Smith Show," which was unfairly mentioned several times), I would like to add a few of my own: "hype" itself is overrated; living in Soho and Tribeca; Rem Koolhaas' Prada Store; SUVs; and, of course, New York City neighborhoods.

What can I say, a great magazine and terrific writers.

Garo Gumusyan AIA
New York City

Thank you for your insightful editorial ["Editor's Letter," November/December 2002]. It caused me to recall the session at the AIA National Convention in Charlotte at which time the Gold Medal winners held forth on the subject of whether architectural design is an exercise in fashion or a true artistic endeavor. Let alone that such luminaries as Arthur Erickson, Michael Graves, and Richard Meier went 45 minutes long in their scheduled time, the folks on stage wore navy blazers, navy slacks, navy shirts, navy satin ties and all looked like Regis Philbin. What was seen was more convincing than what was said. We tend to entertain ourselves.

We here [in Texas] admire your fine publication.

John Nyfeler FAIA
President-elect, Texas Society of Architects
Austin, Texas

I enjoyed several of Joan Wickersham's perceptions ["Where Am I? The city as a place of healing," September/October 2002] and want to comment further. I think it has always been true that neither hospitals nor doctors cure the injured or make sick patients well, and it is refreshing to see people looking at emotional and cognitive well-being as issues. Certainly in crisis moments doctors and hospitals have the resources to make "smart connections" for a patient's recovery, but the body's ability to heal always has come from being out in the world and releasing energy deep within.

I have to agree further that the design of hospitals in my area has not embraced the healing process yet as a viable business plan. Perhaps the insurance industry's emphasis on diagnosable diseases has their hands tied, but hospitals are also closed in their architectural feedback process. Doctors themselves are very often taught to believe that their medical work is not a hands-on practice and that, with modern surgical advances, their involvement with the patient will become a metaphorical abstraction.

Contrary to Ms. Wickersham's opinion, promoting health is an ongoing educational process that I do think can be supported by designers. Many are just now learning the difference between users and patients. Her frustration with clinically sterile interiors and archaic paradigms is understandable, but if our buildings are an historical record of our thinking, then it is worthwhile to consider having a vital message.

One day the health of our minds, the structure of our bodies, and the spaces that engage them will not be separated in thought or by the design process. Creating healing environments is a restorative journey that can create health for people. I like the "body-building connection" mentioned elsewhere in your magazine, and encourage the profession to consider it also.

Douglas J. Pucci, Doctor of Chiropractic
Oradell, New Jersey

Charles Redmon is correct in stating: "An ever-expanding profession, made up of passionate practitioners pursuing diverse careers and collaborating in an ever-smarter marketplace, is far healthier than an increasingly narrow profession of isolated specialists." ["Two Views: Specialty Certification," November/December 2002]. Joan Saba appears to be saying that architects working on non-healthcare projects do no planning, programming, design, documentation, construction, or post-construction services. I must agree that healthcare facilities do involve the architect in a great deal of detail concerning the functional operation of the specific facility. But I know that the planning process is the same in any successful project, especially when the owner demands that the architects immerse themselves in the functional operations of the building in order to properly design for the owners' needs. The American College of Healthcare Architects [ACHA] is one of the strongest interest areas within the AIA and must be commended for its efforts in the education of architects as it pertains to healthcare facilities and recognizing good healthcare design. But if the ACHA effort goes beyond this education program, it will be exposing the AIA to the "splinter" virus for which there is no known cure. The debilitating effects to the AIA of the "splinter" virus are not perceived but real.

William J. Mello Jr., AIA
Bedford, Massachusetts

The *ArchitectureBoston* issue on "Hype" [November/December 2002] points out the contradiction at the heart of the architectural profession. As architects we need validity, trust, and realistic expectations in our relationships with our clients. Publications, awards, and the persona of "form-giver" all convey an aura upon the architect which can serve as evidence of credibility. We, therefore, deride the hyping of architecture and architects while continuously looking for ways to achieve the cultural status that hyping confers. Of course, our culture has completely lost its moral bearings, and hype has become a form of stimulation rather than a means of communication. But don't architects have a responsibility to promote the "substance" of architecture? Several contributors to the "Hype" issue described what this substance consists of. My short list includes leadership on quality-of-life issues such as sprawl and energy conservation, as well as life-safety and innovation in building technology.

A. Vernon Woodworth AIA
Sullivan Code Group
Boston

As David Dixon alludes to in his article, "Building the Bunker: Defensible space and defensible behavior" [September/October, 2002], we have been living with some examples of the buildings of the future in Boston (and other cities as well) since about 1975. On Washington Street near Downtown Crossing there is a building designed as "defensible space." Exchange Place offers the same street amenities as those proposed to defend against terrorism. Without windows or openings of any kind, the walls are a hard edge against which pedestrian movement is threatened by a lack of escape potential.

Other cities have their concessions to terror and security. The Bonaventure Complex in Los Angeles, Detroit's Renaissance Center, the Houston Center, and the Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta are examples of designs turned inward for security against violence. If this were the definitive design to resist terrorism and civil disturbance, every city in Israel would show this evolution after 50 years of random violence. There are, obviously, better designs to control access and exposure.

True protection and security comes from awareness, observation and familiarity. The North End was a safe place to live and raise a family for the first half of the 20th century because everyone was aware of those who belonged in and to the neighborhood and who was a stranger. The deterioration of that feeling of safety stems from the progressive disintegration of the neighborhood and the influx of disinterested strangers. Living in the area without participating in the daily activities, these new residents, many of them singles or working couples, take the place of the older overseers.

Some unique features of streetscape separating vehicles and pedestrians, such as planters, fences, grade separation, trees, and bollards (cast-iron hitching posts), have been utilized to provide safety and a feeling of security in the past. On Commonwealth Avenue in Boston's Back Bay, for example, pedestrians derive a feeling of security by the separation from the street by parked cars, a curb and a tree line with bollards. Residences are additionally separated by about 10 feet of iron-fenced grass or planted area and another curbing. The proximity of the residences to the street provides security for pedestrians without forfeiting pleasant outdoor use by stoop sitters. Each element of this existing design may be slightly exaggerated in an urban environment to harden buildings without obvious repulsion.

George Jessop AIA
Centerville, Massachusetts

Jerry Tepe asks in his letter ["Letters to the Editor," November/December 2002] about Kallmann McKinnell & Wood Architects' application for a building code variance: "Is it not our professional responsibility to ensure that our designs...are in total compliance with all applicable codes?"

We applaud his call for architects to inform themselves about the codes but also offer these words of caution. Architects forego a great deal of their professional responsibility to their clients and to society in general when they do not remain in a critical relationship to the laws and customs under which they are being asked to design. Unfortunately, the ethical codes for architects (issued by NCARB and AIA) currently seem to imply that architects must obey all laws without question.

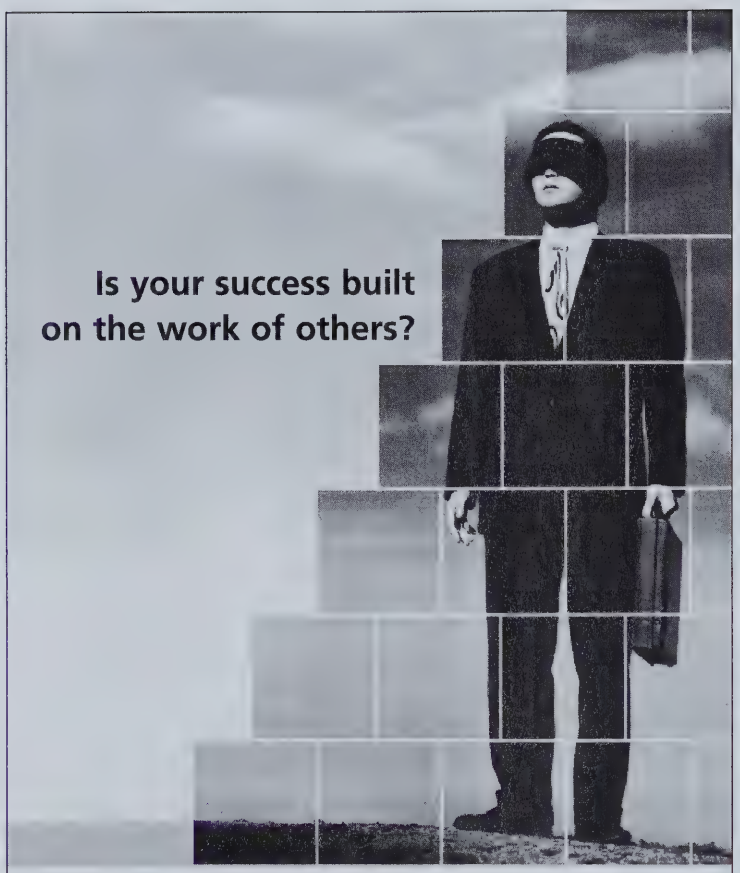
Contrast this with the ethical codes of the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association which, quite to the contrary, demand that doctors and lawyers play an active and continual role in reforming the law when it does not fully support their capacity to render their services.

Taking the codes into consideration is only a starting point to rendering professional services ethically. Sometimes, seeking variances or even wholesale code overhauls is the more responsible, more ethical position when it comes to maintaining the high standards for the built environment that the public has entrusted to architects. Great improvements in our built environment might result if more architects resisted the temptations of passivity and emulated their more active professional colleagues in this matter.

Victoria Beach AIA
Brad Walker AIA
Chairs, BSA Ethics Forum
Boston

We want to hear from you. Letters may be sent to: epadjen@architects.org or *ArchitectureBoston*, 52 Broad St., Boston, MA 02109.

Letters may be edited for clarity and length and must include your name, address, and daytime telephone number. Length should not exceed 300 words.



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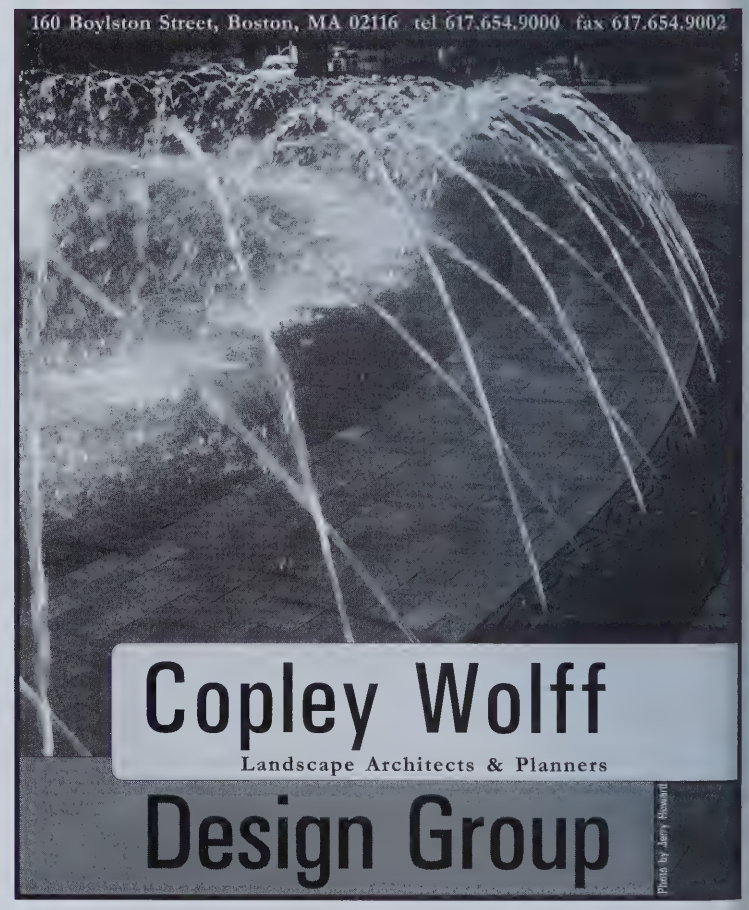

THE STORY OF A KITCHEN INSPIRED BY A FIREPLACE.

Not long ago, a couple visited the Water & Fire Design Center with an idea for their dream kitchen. They knew we could make their dream a reality. She told us about how, on their last trip to France, they had fallen in love.

With a fireplace.

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Every day, after a walk through the exotic gardens of the French countryside, they would be lured back to the fireplace's warmth and comforting presence.

Italian style in their home in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

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Burying Olmsted

The Riverway segment of The Emerald Necklace, Boston

Design: Frederick Law Olmsted

photo: Karen Sparacio/Boston Parks Department, courtesy of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy

Participants:

Rebecca Barnes FAIA is chief planner of the City of Boston at the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and is a past president of the Boston Society of Architects.

Harry Fuller ASLA is the president of Carol R. Johnson Associates, Inc. in Boston.

Shauna Gillies-Smith is the principal of Ground, a landscape design and public art practice in Boston.

Mark Klopfer is a principal of Landworks Studio, Inc. in Salem, Massachusetts. A design critic in the department of landscape architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, he was a fellow at the American Academy in Rome in 2001.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Marion Pressley FASLA is a principal of Pressley Associates, Inc. in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She teaches landscape history in the Radcliffe Seminars program and at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Lynn Wolff ASLA is a principal of Copley Wolff Design Group in Boston.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: If you asked someone on the street to name a landscape architect, I would guess the first, maybe the only, answer would be Frederick Law Olmsted — if you were lucky enough to get an answer at all. And if you asked what Olmsted designed, you might hear Emerald Necklace in Boston and Central Park, and that would probably be the end of the conversation. I'd like to talk a little bit about Olmsted and his influence. Is his ghost still walking the streets of Boston and, if so, what do you think his continuing presence means in terms of landscape architecture? How has he influenced the ways the public sees landscape?

HARRY FULLER: I don't run into Olmsted a lot. I think we only really run into Olmsted when we're working on a site that he designed. Olmsted is well known in the Boston area because he had such a hand in the beginnings of Boston as we know it now. Boston is a place that relishes and sells history, so it's easy to fit Olmsted into that selling of Boston. But I don't think that applies to the rest of the country. And I don't think there is a ghost here.

SHAUNA GILLIES-SMITH: I disagree — I think that there's often a conflation of Olmsted as a symbol of the archetypal American landscape and our understanding of the naturalistic, English country style, which was part of the genesis of the Olmsted firm. One way to think about the ghost of Olmsted is in terms of our continuing comfort with naturalistic landscapes and a consequent discomfort with other types of landscapes.

REBECCA BARNES: One of the manifestations of that in Boston in recent years is the fact that so many people can think of only Post Office Square as an example of good park design. It's not classically Olmstedian, but it uses certain

elements — the trellis, the building, a nice little lawn, lots of plants — that seem Olmstedian in their inspiration. Maybe that's different from a ghost. It's more like a mesmerizing of people because it repeats in contemporary terms the instincts that Olmsted was playing out, but doesn't really offer an alternative. I feel similarly about City Square Park in Charlestown. Those parks haven't extended our imagination about what roles parks play in urban life.

Marion Pressley: I think that the roots of that problem go back before Olmsted. There are other examples — our need to turn Copley Square from a hard landscape into a soft landscape, or our insistence that we can't live with a piazza design for Government Center. I think it can be laid very squarely on Thomas Jefferson's shoulders. It's really anti-urbanism in its rawest form. It's Mr. Jefferson who led us into an agrarian society, who said that cities are not safe and that we need to live in a rural condition. So by the time Olmsted arrived, there had been a lot of groundwork set in our way of looking at things. I think it's our anti-urbanism that is really at the root of a lot of what happens today. I wouldn't interpret Post Office Square or City Square Park as Olmstedian. They're too exposed to urban life, and if you look at the essence of Olmsted's parks, whether they're big or small, you find that the separation from the city is a very important part of them.

Lynn Wolff: We're talking purely in terms of aesthetics. But Olmsted was really a social reformer. Much of Olmsted's work was about health and interaction among social classes. So I think in that respect, the Olmstedian tradition of interaction and designing places that are human is different from the more avant-garde forms of landscape. It's not just an aesthetic.

Harry Fuller: But you could have what you're calling an avant-garde or very contemporary landscape aesthetic that would solve all of those social issues. I just don't think we have one in Boston yet.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: It is very interesting to read Olmsted or texts about Olmsted. There's very little discussion about the aesthetic. The discussion is about the program, about the separation of uses, about the mingling of classes. It's pretty hard to derive the aesthetic principles from the text, yet I think that when people describe an Olmstedian landscape, they tend to refer to the stylistic aspects of his work.

Elizabeth Padjen: One of the reasons Rebecca might have called Post Office Square Olmstedian is that it represents a romantic idea about the land and landscape. I wonder if that is still a pervasive attitude that affects the way people address landscapes, even in the city.

Mark Klopfer: One of the keys to looking at landscapes is the education of the designers who built them and their understanding of what an Olmsted landscape is. We're talking about it now in terms of its social program. There have been some interesting critiques about Olmsted's social programs and the populations that were excluded in some ways. For example, he would often describe the parks as places for underclass women and children, but there was always an exclusion of young working-class men, whose activities were not wanted in the parks. But I'm not sure that much of that is taught in a typical landscape history course. The examination of Olmsted parks is usually based on more formal aspects. I teach at Harvard in the first-year program. We have a studio that looks at one of Olmsted's small parks in Charlestown, Doherty Park. Doherty has a lot of the typical set pieces of an Olmsted landscape and puts them on a very small site. It has a slope. It has a lawn. It has plantings around the perimeter. It has paths that wind through it. And it's always interesting to see how students interact with it. The amount of reverence that's given to the Olmsted piece — how they connect to it or deny it — is an interesting point of departure. It brings up some essential design issues in their first semester.

Elizabeth Padjen: Is the reverence due to the fact that they know the park is by Olmsted or are they responding to some inherent quality in the space?

Mark Klopfer: The fact that it's an Olmsted landscape adds a level of complexity to the issues that they're dealing with.

Marion Pressley: Doherty Park is a very interesting case study — many people are not aware of the fact that Olmsted did quite a few of these smaller neighborhood parks in both New York City and Boston. They were influenced by the small squares and parks that were developed as part of the park system in Paris during the 1860s and 1870s.

Rebecca Barnes: The word "system" is an important part of the power of the Olmsted legacy here in Boston because of the Emerald Necklace. There is also a system of Olmsted parks in Seattle,

Does Olmsted's ghost still walk the streets of Boston?

I vote to exhume Olmsted. I hardly think that contemporary painters are talking about burying, say, Carravaggio — or that many architects are trying to bury Sullivan or Wright. What I would like to bury is silly 20th-century decorative post-Olmsted landscapes that are pattern-obsessed and not spatial and those that fail to grasp the great and defining quality of landscape as a design art: that the medium of landscape is a living medium, that the felt landscape is the conveyor of crucial experiences and meanings in the modern city. What I would also like to bury is architects talking about landscape. They have added little except confusion in the conversation about the Artery project in Boston. Architects should get their own house in order; from my side of the fence, it looks rather muddled over there right now. Bury Olmsted? Hogwash. Honor Olmsted, study Olmsted, understand Olmsted. He left a legacy that few other designers in any profession could hope to exceed, let alone equal.

Michael van Valkenburgh
Michael van Valkenburgh Associates, Boston

and there may be in other cities as well. It's a continuous landscape, it offers many experiences, and it connects many places in a city. I think that's part of the excitement that a lot of people feel about the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the Central Artery corridor — that it's being developed as a system, at a scale larger than a single park, to become a feature that makes connections among several parts of the city. But are there any contemporary landscape architects who are thinking and working at the scale of a city or region similar to Olmsted?

LYNN WOLFF: I don't think so, certainly not many. The land isn't available.

MARION PRESSLEY: Pittsburgh is one example, with the three rivers park system that it's developing. [The architecture firm] Chan Krieger has done a masterplan for developing land that would be considered brownfields — abandoned industrial sites — along both sides of the Allegheny and the Mon Rivers.

HARRY FULLER: A lot of the modern park movement relates to water — rivers, streams, harbors. The earlier movements focused on internal parks. Now many American cities are seeing a regeneration of the urban edges along waterways.

MARION PRESSLEY: And trailways, too. There are whole systems of trails being developed along riverways and abandoned railways. That's another form of park system.

SHAUNA GILLIES-SMITH: I think interest in waterways and railways is because they've been ignored. They're the leftover pieces of land in the city.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Marion mentioned Chan Krieger, which is an architectural and urban design firm. That brings up the issue of professional turf. Urban design started to emerge as a professional discipline in the '50s and '60s, but really came into its own in the '70s and the '80s. Since then, it has become a common ground or neutral turf, depending on how you look at it. Architects say they're urban designers. Landscape architects say they're urban designers. It's become a free-for-all.

REBECCA BARNES: I've often wondered if landscape architects don't feel as though something was stolen from them that was rightfully theirs in the creation of that discipline.

Central Artery/Tunnel: Wharf District Parks

Plan by:
EDAW Inc.
Copley Wolff Design Group

MARION PRESSLEY: Actually, planning came first as a discipline, before urban design. The irony is that Olmsted's son — FLO, Junior — was one of the early leaders of both the planning and landscape architecture professions in the 20th century. So you had planners and architects and landscape architects all eyeing this thing called urban design.

SHAUNA GILLIES-SMITH: I actually came to landscape architecture from the opposite direction. My degrees are in architecture and urban design and, when I graduated, I couldn't identify an urban designer who I wanted to work for. I realized that landscape architects could be working at that same scale in a more creative manner. Frequently urban design is limited to building envelopes with no clear authorship in terms of designing the public space. I envisioned an approach to urban design that carefully maps out the building uses and the streetscape but then uses the design of a specific area to create a very clear identity — rather than just leaving it as a vacuum for someone else to fill.

LYNN WOLFF: One of the differences between architects and planners versus landscape architects is that landscape architects study social interaction and how people use space. I think that landscape architects have a very good handle on the scale of outdoor spaces. That's what makes systems and spaces connect and interact and ultimately what makes cities work. We think how people walk through sequences of spaces — where they feel confined, and where they feel relaxed. Our training is very much based on social sciences and psychology and ecology. We really are specialists in the design of spaces for people.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Then why are landscape architects at the end of the food chain? Aren't landscape architects and the landscape budget hit first in a recession?

MARION PRESSLEY: No, that's a typical misconception. When recessions hit in the past, the big firms carried on. Why? Because they all had public park work. I would say that for probably 75 percent of our business, we are the prime contractors, not subcontractors or subconsultants. We do very little work for architects directly. Often we're hired by the planner or the developer to design the whole project. And sometimes we even hire the architects.

HARRY FULLER: Our firm is a little different — about half of our work, maybe 40 percent, is with architects.

Mark Klopfer: I think we're starting to see a transformation, too, in the way some owners or clients view landscape architecture. An example is college and university campus planning and design. Some campuses are taking the point of view that the most important thing is a landscape that's cohesive, a landscape that gives the institution an identity. And then you can plug in buildings by different architects. The idea that a landscape is the thing that binds all these disparate architectural pieces together is gaining much greater acceptance.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: But, Mark, I do think there's a germ of truth in Elizabeth's comment — landscape architects are at the end of the food chain in terms of visibility. In terms of public recognition that they create an authored space. I think this has to do with the materials that we work with. They're very ephemeral materials. Going back to Olmsted, if you were to ask the person on the street if an Olmsted park was an authored space or if it was just naturally like that, everyone would answer that it's naturally like that. People have a comfort level with a naturalistic landscape in that if one thinks that landscapes are made by God, then there's a discomfort with a landscape that looks like it was authored by a strong hand.

Harry Fuller: I think you're right. It's a problem that the profession is struggling with. It's easy for other professions to demonstrate need. You need a doctor because he's going to fix your body. You need an architect because you want to build a building. Why do you need a landscape architect? That demonstration of need is what the profession is struggling with.

Marion Pressley: We've come a long way, though.

Lynn Wolff: I also think that the value of open space has really been elevated. Look at any architecture magazine now. There are many, many articles talking about open-space developments. Ten years ago, you would never see an article in the paper about parks and open space.

Marion Pressley: I think it's the public/private partnerships that brought this change about. We now have all these green groups that have come into being — and there are a lot of them in Boston. They've made a tremendous difference. The Emerald Necklace, for example, has 10 or 11 "friends" groups that independently call themselves friends of various pieces along its length. Those people are all educated about the value of open space. So I think it's the public/private partnerships that have made a big difference, because you get to the laypeople who you're concerned about, and they understand the importance of open space.

Elizabeth Padjen: Let's go back to Shauna's phrase, "authored space," because it represents an interesting distinction. The relative visibility of authorship starts to define some of the differences we're seeing in landscape architecture today. On the one hand, we have a very romantic kind of landscape, a very green, nature-is-still-with-us view of landscape, and on the other hand we have landscape as art. And there are obviously pieces that are in between. I wonder what you think about those degrees of authorship and how they're represented here in Boston.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: I don't think that there's a visible authorship with respect to most public spaces in Boston. There are only a couple of spaces that I would send beginning students to as an introduction to what contemporary landscape architecture is about: Pete Walker's Tanner Fountain at Harvard and Stanley Saitowitz's Holocaust Memorial. I don't think the lack of contemporary work is peculiar to Boston, but it may be more surprising here compared to some cities. It goes back to Marion's point about an ethos of the agrarian. I think there's definitely a place for a natural landscape, but I think that there is also a place for expanding the menu of choices, and for accommodating a much stronger, more visible hand in the design of a lot of spaces.

Harry Fuller: I think the naturalistic spaces that you see lack known authors because they all sort of meld together. Authors are known in very contemporary landscapes that are so distinctive that people will associate a name with it. That doesn't mean that kind of landscape is any better than the naturalistic landscape.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: But is it worse?

Harry Fuller: It just means it's more noticeable. That also goes along with what is being published. A very contemporary landscape has a greater chance of being published right now and therefore you are more likely to know the author.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: I think it's very interesting that Boston is one of the hot beds of contemporary landscape architects in the country, and yet the people most associated with that are not practicing here. None of those people — Martha Schwartz, George Hargreaves — are doing any work in this city.

Does Olmsted's ghost still walk the streets of Boston?

Olmsted's ghost, if you look carefully, is still kicking and remains unbrainwashed by temporary fads and trends. What continues to be amazing is this ghost's ability to deal with space and transitions. Perhaps that is why landscapes such as New York's Prospect Park have stood the test of time and continue to offer lessons for the next generation. Olmsted is a friendly ghost to those who want to see him.

Craig Halvorson
Halvorson Design Partnership
Boston

Marion Pressley: Martha did the bagel garden here. What put her on the map was the bagel garden on the cover of the ASLA magazine.

Lynn Wolff: I wonder if this phenomenon is due to the level of community participation here. It could be because public funding of landscape, which is the majority of it, requires community participation. Public money means that the design becomes a democratic design. And that process discourages the kinds of contemporary spaces you're talking about.

photo courtesy Hargreaves Associates, Inc

Sydney Olympics 2000
Sydney, Australia

Designer:
Hargreaves Associates

photo: Martha Schwartz

The Bagel Garden
Boston

Designer:
Martha Schwartz, Inc.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: But think of Portland, Oregon. Portland has a very progressive public landscape.

Lynn Wolff: Maybe it has better leadership.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: The thing that interests me about Portland is that it continues to foster an exploration of the landscape that I think is much more progressive than its architecture. Lawrence Halprin did the Lovejoy Fountain in the '60s. Since then, Portland has hired Peter Walker. Robert Murase has done work there, as have Martha Schwartz and George Hargreaves.

Elizabeth Padjen: If we can use authorship or voice as a handle for this, it seems to me that one of the ways that young designers get known is to develop a voice and have someone discover it. It's something that is different that puts them on the map. It's the bagel garden maybe. But I wonder what the challenges are for young firms. Mark, I'll put this question to you since your firm is relatively young.

Mark Klopfer: Well, we face an odd set of problems. A lot of mechanisms that were put in place a few decades ago to address firm ownership have made things really difficult for us. Our office is run by two men, and we're interested in doing public work and operating in the public realm. But it's extremely difficult to get there because landscape firms are often brought onto project teams to fill out a roster of minority- and women-owned businesses. And that's something that our office doesn't meet, and it's impossible to surmount. So our aspiration is to work on commercial projects where we can build landscapes that people, the public, will occupy. That's got to be our strategy because there's no other way to do it.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: And then there's the problem that a lot of public work is awarded on the basis of previous experience. So unless one has done that, one doesn't get it. It's the chicken and the egg.

Mark Klopfer: There's also the issue of time and landscape. Michael Blier started our office six years ago, and it takes that long to actually have a project built and then to mature. At the end of construction, architects go in and photograph their buildings before they're too lived in, but a landscape really needs the time to mature. Some of the landscapes that Michael did at the very beginning are only now starting to show the intent.

Rebecca Barnes: It's interesting to consider two of the Boston sites that Shauna mentioned earlier in that context. One is a fountain that's rocks and steam. That didn't take any time to mature. The other is a memorial to the Holocaust, which is primarily also a built structure. Think about what Mark was just saying about the maturation time. One might say, well, Mark, why don't you do some landscape art for a while then?

Harry Fuller: But to some extent that is why you become a landscape architect. Part of the challenge is to be able to understand a place over time and to design for the fact that it has an existence over time.

Marion Pressley: One of the things that Olmsted said was that he believed that the real test of a landscape was whether it could stand the test of time. He said that if his Central Park still existed in a hundred years, it would have passed the test of time and that would be a test of his philosophies. Things can appear to be on the cutting edge. But will they meet the test of time? One of the landscape magazines recently published a critique of Parc de la Villette, which was designed by Bernard Tschumi about 10 years ago in Paris. You probably all remember it: the little red structures — the "follies" — with no particular purpose, scattered across the lawn. It was considered a major cutting-edge thing at the time, much admired. It was part of the Deconstructivist thing that everyone was doing. But the people have voted — they voted with their feet, and they voted, *Non*. It is a desolate landscape. Very few people there. Things aren't functioning. The follies look beautiful in red in the landscape, but there are no people. But you can drive just five minutes away to Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, which was done in 1860, and find a picturesque city park functioning as it always has, fully populated by neighborhood people, the old, the young. What now will pass the hundred-year test of time? Will Hargreaves' landscapes? Will Martha Schwartz's?

Shauna Gillies-Smith: Why does Boston have such hesitancy to be even a little bit experimental with the landscape? I actually believe that Boston right now is coming into a sort of renaissance of progressive architecture. But that's not reflected in landscape. Is it because of its status as one of the few historic cities within North America? Does that make people want to preserve it? Does that make them reluctant to do something that might not pass the test of time?

Mark Klopfer: It's especially true in political circles. Why isn't Boston's park department interested in doing more modern landscapes?

Rebecca Barnes: Part of the answer is that typically it doesn't have money to invest in new properties, period. The budget is barely adequate to maintain what exists. One recent exception is Millennium Park in West Roxbury, where soil from the Big Dig was used to cap the old landfill.

Harry Fuller: It may not look like a Hargreaves landscape, but that is cutting-edge work.

Marion Pressley: I agree. There's a whole cutting-edge approach to the technology of taking a totally derelict landscape — brownfields, landfill — and then capping it, putting the soil on it, and bringing it back as a reforested or reconstituted landscape. It's not so much a picturesque landscape as much as it is an ecological landscape. And I don't think these projects are being recognized.

Harry Fuller: A lot more of those projects are done in Europe than here.

Elizabeth Padjen: What are we missing in terms of these kinds of projects getting recognition? Why are they failing to call attention to themselves?

Mark Klopfer: They're starting to. But it's also an imageability issue. How do you hype a huge 50-acre site that has this biomediation happening on it? It's very difficult to make that compelling enough to put in a non-trade publication.

Elizabeth Padjen: Some of the leading research on those kinds of landscapes is being done at Harvard. I'd like to talk a bit about the presence of the schools in this region. Here we have at Harvard the oldest landscape program in the country, we have a program at RISD and at UMass. The University of Rhode Island offers a landscape degree, as does the Conway School in western Massachusetts. You can study landscape at the Radcliffe Seminars and the various programs at the Arnold Arboretum. And there are others. They are all part of a universe of educational opportunity in landscape architecture for people who have varying needs or expectations. I wonder how that coalesces to create a community of landscape architects. Does it? I frankly see very little effect from this number of institutions that are all within, perhaps, 75 miles of one another. I would think there would be greater vibrancy. Is there something we should be expecting of the schools in terms of visibility?

Does Olmsted's ghost still walk the streets of Boston?

Of course. From Olmsted we inherited a 19th-century legacy that defines and articulates Boston's historic landscapes. The issue in front of us today is how to bring forward an equally compelling vision on sites such as today's typical urban infill situations, which are completely different from the countryside parcels of yesteryear. The public, government officials, and private benefactors must understand the ground is different, and designers must lead as Olmsted once did.

George Hargreaves
Hargreaves Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Should we expect the schools to insert themselves into the public discussion?

MARK KLOPFER: A lot of schools do. Cornell, for instance, is really interested in developing a community-based program, and it is trying to have an extension capacity that works with the public and works in elementary schools and high schools as a way of educating another generation about what landscape architecture is and why it's important.

HARRY FULLER: I don't know that it's up to the professional schools. We in the profession need to get into the high schools. If I weren't my children's father, they wouldn't have any idea what a landscape architect does. It's up to us to tell people.

LYNN WOLFF: But I think also the invisibility is due to the fact that landscape architects are generally really nice people. They don't have a very flamboyant demeanor. Generally. And they're not very political. I think that more landscape architects need to be involved in public affairs — to be visible and make their opinions known.

REBECCA BARNES: I've always heard that — that there's a different personality profile in landscape. But I wasn't going to bring it up.

MARION PRESSLEY: I think it's true. I think landscape architects are more of the second-man-in, the one who doesn't have to make the big statement. In other words, the person who can live with what somebody else has done and extend it and keep going with it.

MARK KLOPFER: I'm horrified by that. Maybe one of the reasons is that I know we have at least two converts here. I was trained and worked as an architect and Shauna was as well. And so, I always go back and question why I made the switch. For me, it had to do with opportunity. I love architecture, I still do, and I miss it in some ways, but I think that landscape, because it's so young as a discipline, offers great opportunities to make of it what you can. You're only hemmed in by your own creativity and your own motivation. We've talked about the factors that limit us, and how we feel oppressed by this or that aspect of practicing landscape. But wow, there's such an amazing opportunity because it's not really defined. It works in the realm of urban design. It works in the realm of planning. It works in the realm of architecture. It works in the realm of art. And it moves among those things in a much more fluid way than other disciplines.

photo: Landworks Studio, Inc.

Wooster Group retreat
Western Maine

Design:
Landworks Studio, Inc.

MARION PRESSLEY: You know, I always find it interesting when people say landscape architecture is a very young profession. What was Le Nôtre doing in 1656? What about Capability Brown in the 1700s? What about Pirro Ligorio, who designed Villa D'Este in Tivoli in the 1550s? They were all landscape architects, designing massive estates. In this country, New York City was designed as a whole series of squares when it was still New Amsterdam. Look at Savannah, at Philadelphia. The heck with that, go back to St. Augustine. We need to think of ourselves as part of a profession that existed long before Olmsted.

MARK KLOPFER: Yes, but it was not a discipline distinct from architects or engineers or artists-poets. That began a hundred years ago, almost to the year, when Harvard decided to start a landscape program. In today's world, the disciplines are defined and, for me, this one has an elasticity that the others don't.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Where do you see landscape going in terms of public response to it? If Post Office Square is the accepted gold standard for public spaces in this city, that defines one set of expectations. Will those expectations change with the presence of people like George Hargreaves and Martha Schwartz? Are they some kind of magnetic influence that will eventually draw everyone in another direction? Or will they become isolated?

LYNN WOLFF: I think that there's a place for both approaches and that it depends upon the site and it depends upon the use. I think we need more of the George-and-Martha type of landscape in Boston, but I think that both are correct as long as they accommodate people.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: We've been focusing on Martha and George, but there are others. One person who hasn't been mentioned is Dan Kiley, although he represents an older generation of designers.

LYNN WOLFF: I was going to bring up Dan Kiley because I think he has an interesting design ethic — instead of copying nature, he abstracts it.

HARRY FULLER: It's a very pure approach to design.

Mark Klopfer: I was going to mention Dan, too, when the question was raised at the very beginning about landscape architects people have heard of. A lot of people who know something about art know about his work. It's especially significant in its relationship to art and architecture.

Lynn Wolff: Lawrence Halprin is another one.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: Garrett Ekbo and Thomas Church were part of that generation, too. But if we mention George and Martha, we have to mention Pete Walker and Michael Van Valkenburgh.

Elizabeth Padjen: I think of Michael as having a different aesthetic from the other three.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: Probably because he uses plants so effectively. He works with the natural landscape as a partner, and so his work is not as visible.

Marion Pressley: I think he hasn't been published as much as the others.

Mark Klopfer: It's the imageability issue again, and its relationship to being published. How do you photograph a Van Valkenburgh? But it's a wonderful thing to experience, and a wonderful thing to own. It's a very difficult thing to represent.

Lynn Wolff: I think it's interesting that these discussions always get back to imageability, which means they always gets back to the way things look. I'm sure architecture is the same way. It means you don't really recognize the socially significant contributions or the fact that the process may be as valuable as the product.

Harry Fuller: I agree. A lot of things are produced in and of their own sake. Contemporary design for the sake of contemporary design. It's not honest. That doesn't mean that they've solved all the problems and that they are good design. But they get published. And because they get published, we notice them and we know who their authors are.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: I was a principal designer with Martha Schwartz for quite a few years, and I wouldn't say that any of the projects that I worked on were contemporary design for the sake of doing contemporary design. The majority of our discussions in the office were practical discussions. I think the thing that Martha has been most significant for, probably more so than anyone, is opening up the palette of what is possible in landscape architecture. There are waves of students and landscape architects who are now approaching things in a much more open-eyed manner. But we still have the problem of getting over the impression that landscape architecture has to be a certain way in Boston.

Lynn Wolff: I think you need more private money.

Marion Pressley: A lot of Martha's early cutting-edge stuff was private work. As was George Hargreaves' and Peter Walker's — individuals, private businesses, and corporations. But the big question is the one that Elizabeth posed. Who will be the next layer down who are trying to imitate these people? It happens in architecture, too — you get the big names and then you get the imitators who follow, the smaller firms who break off.

Elizabeth Padjen: But there's a big difference between being an imitator and being influenced by someone. I'm curious about the nature of that influence, if indeed we'll be able to identify an influence a few years from now, and what the conditions might be that would foster a change in public tastes and expectations.

Lynn Wolff: I mentioned public money and community process. A lot of public art is done for a few people, paid for by a few people, and they have strong opinions. I think that if public money is involved, we need strong design leadership in the BRA [Boston Redevelopment Authority] and the Parks Department that can say, let's do something else.

Rebecca Barnes: Is the BSLA [Boston Society of Landscape Architects] participating in the search for a new parks commissioner? That seems to me to be one of the biggest opportunities. I think it would be a mistake to think that change is going to happen only in the private sector. Both sectors, public and private, have to be committed. That also suggests that landscape architects need to cultivate and inform their clients. If, for example, there are three groups that are Olmsted champions, historicists, or preservationists, is there a fourth group that's about a different kind of landscape? Who's doing that education? Who's responsible for that communication? Maybe that's something that architects and landscape architects can do together. I think we all share an interest in having our physical world and our social world reflect our values and aspirations, and the landscape does that at least as much as buildings do it. I was fascinated by Shauna's observation that architecture in this

Does Olmsted's ghost still walk the streets of Boston?

There is no ghost of Olmsted. There is the sad relic of a synthetic landscape infrastructure in Boston, barely discernable among its poisoned waterways, broken parkways, and listless governing authorities. Yet there is also the profound lesson in Olmsted's career that deeply held and rigorously pursued convictions about urbanization and change could overcome our culture's tendency toward conservative, regressive building. If we believe that the landscape can be an expressive force for the democratic city, as Olmsted did, then we'll stop making things that pretend to look like Olmsted's, and we'll stop preserving mere fragments of his work, and instead follow his real motivation: Reform.

Gary R. Hilderbrand
Reed Hilderbrand
Watertown, Massachusetts

rendering: S. Carman

Does Olmsted's ghost still walk the streets of Boston?

Unfortunately, yes — but as a cheap designer knock-off, decades removed from cultural and social context.

Chris Reed
StoSS landscape urbanism
Boston

Olmsted brought the landscape into the city for the "refreshment" of its citizens. His ghost still walks, searching for spaces that promote well-being. He moans a lot, but sometimes he smiles.

Julie Moir Messervy
Wellesley, Massachusetts

city has somehow passed over a hurdle and that it's not stuck in the same time warp. I know other people feel quite differently. But it suggests that the kind of communication I'm talking about has been working in the architectural field. Is there, for example, a landscape architecture critic on any major newspaper?

HARRY FULLER: I don't think so.

REBECCA BARNES: That's how a lot of people get their ideas about architecture.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: How would a landscape architect's vision of public space be different from an architect's?

LYNN WOLFF: I can answer that with an example: City Hall Plaza. An architect's idea of how that space could be enlivened is to enliven the edges and the buildings — in order to make the space successful, you have to get people to the space, even by filling the void. Whereas a landscape architect feels that the space itself is an attraction. That the space can generate activity. An architect often thinks that you have to have commercial development and you have to have real estate to activate a space. Landscape architects feel that there are ways to activate the space and bring value to the surroundings through the open space.

REBECCA BARNES: I want to know what you all think we should be doing with City Hall Plaza.

MARION PRESSLEY: I wish you wouldn't green it. That's all I can say. We need a TV show that goes to Florence and shows all of the piazzas there and how they operate as public space — that was the premise of City Hall Plaza. And then it could go to the Piazza Maria Novella and see the disaster of green placed into an urban space in an Italian city.

LYNN WOLFF: I agree, it shouldn't be green. I think there should be a series of temporary installations. Get people down there.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: The response is that you would all agree that you'd like to see it stay hard?

SHAUNA GILLIES-SMITH: I would.

HARRY FULLER: Yes, certainly more hard than soft.

MARK KLOPFER: And I think this is where a landscape architect can make that open space much, much better.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: This is fascinating — the landscape community just said it should be hard. I suspect a lot of people would find that counter-intuitive. But, more important, that point of view hasn't been loudly expressed in the public forum.

REBECCA BARNES: This makes me go back to the idea of a landscape architecture critic for the newspaper, because I think one of the things that [*Boston Globe* architecture critic] Robert Campbell does for people who have no design background is to help them understand something about the space. Not just how it looks, but how it feels and what it means. Our culture is not good about talking about feelings and experience. Everybody thinks that when they look at a wall, they see the same thing, and that of course is not true. Yet we all think we have a common understanding.

MARK KLOPFER: We also need theoreticians, which is something that's evolving only now. What is landscape theory and how does one start to make an intellectual argument about it?

MARION PRESSLEY: I think that is one thing that distinguishes Olmsted. He was a tremendous writer and communicator. He was a tremendous politician. We could learn from his strategies.

REBECCA BARNES: So maybe this discussion should be about uncovering Olmsted instead of burying him.

MARION PRESSLEY: I had a professor in college who gave a whole lecture about how landscape architects do not create gods. He said that the architects can list their gods — Wright, Saarinen, and others — but we tend to tear down our gods. Even Olmsted. You have to remember this was in the '60s, so you've got to put that into the equation. Things have come a long way since then. But we still don't celebrate people like Hideo Sasaki — a big name, an international practice with his office here in Watertown, but I bet half of the people in Boston don't know his name or the public spaces that he designed here. We haven't had a tradition of creating gods for ourselves, and yet I have the feeling we're now starting to. We haven't got Zeus yet. But there may be little gods and goddesses down here. ■■■

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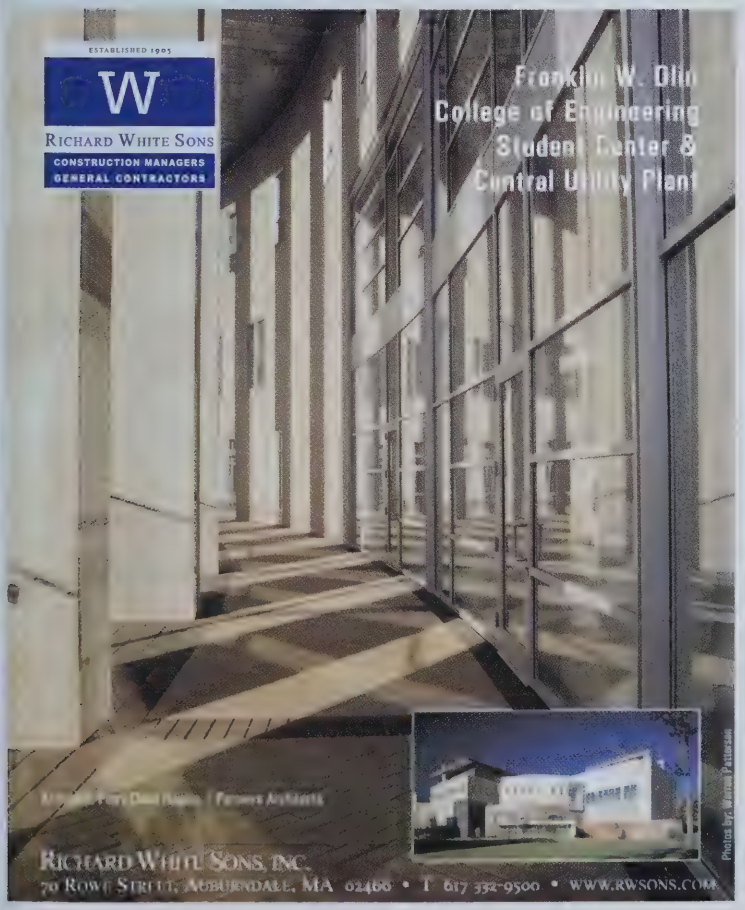

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Lessons from the Little Dig:

The Problem of Landscape Preservation

by Gina Crandell

Courtesy of the Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University

The Emerald Necklace
Boston, Massachusetts

top:
The Fens, twelve years after planting

bottom:
Olmsted's masterplan for the park system from the Boston Common to Franklin Park

While planners and designers ponder the future of the land above Boston's Big Dig, work has quietly begun on a project that poses equally challenging questions about the ways we address the past: the $93-million dredging and restoration of Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace. The Big Dig may someday influence other large urban projects, but this "Little Dig" represents everyday issues facing landscape architects and planners in communities across the country.

In 1878, Olmsted established the world's first linear park, synthesizing engineering and tidal flow to cleanse what had become "the filthiest marsh and mud flats anywhere in Massachusetts." Olmsted's vision went far beyond the solving of technical problems, embracing the notion of landscape contributing to civic life. His stream was idealized and democratic, and he hoped that it would also carry a flow of people through diverse parts of the city, from the Fens all the way to Franklin Park.

The 20th century brought the undoing of much of that vision. The damming of the Charles River in 1910 made Olmsted's tidal cleansing system obsolete. After World War II, land was regularly taken from the Emerald Necklace for roads and elevated highways. Since it now nearly takes a police escort to cross from one Emerald of the Necklace to the next, Olmsted's civic vision is long forgotten.

The former Sears parking lot site in the Riverway section of the Necklace brings questions of restoration into focus. In the 1960s, the Sears department store claimed yet more land when the city agreed to lease part of the Emerald Necklace for the store's parking lot. In the 1990s, grass was planted where the parking lot and river had been; Sears is now Landmark Center, comprising theaters, restaurants, stores, and office space. The plan for this segment of the Emerald Necklace is to pretend it is still a river. Plans call for building a gravel-lined, trapezoidal channel that looks like a river and reconstructing a piece of a shoreline that Olmsted proposed more than a hundred years ago — albeit at a different elevation, in a smaller confine, and in an entirely different context. Could this project, which does no more than gesture nostalgically to the past, possibly respect Olmsted's design? Would Olmsted himself have proposed something with so little vision? Of course not.

We should worry that such a Band-Aid approach to preservation at this location seems palatable to so many people. Perhaps Boston is motivated by regret for having given Olmsted's great work over to cars; perhaps the city is now hostage to what's left. But however guilty Bostonians may be, are they so blind that they cannot tell the difference between a Band-Aid and an authentic monument?

The most pressing question of all is: Where are the advocates of contemporary design? Surely there are citizens who desire lively public places, but it seems that many are debating restoration issues when the need today is the same as it was in the19th century: the design of great civic spaces.

The notion of preserving landscapes is problematic because they change and grow even when they are maintained. Historic issues are now often intertwined with a more recent movement — ecology — and both slide easily toward nostalgia. But even recasting the proposal to reconstruct the "historic shoreline" as an ecological challenge might yield a difference in attitude with significantly different results. The nostalgic gesture of recreating the river may improve water quality by exposing the flow to light and air, but so would an aerating fountain that also could be the centerpiece of an accessible, well-designed contemporary public park. At the larger scale, the $93-million cost of the current plan, largely for dredging the Emerald Necklace, is considered historic (ridding the Necklace of invasive phragmites reeds that obscure Olmsted's "views"), ecological (improving oxygen levels), and hydraulic (providing temporary improvement to flow), but as a civic contribution, it is mute.

The preservation movement emerged in this country at the same time Olmsted was designing the Emerald Necklace. Since then, the machinery of preservation has grown from preserving historic buildings and landscapes to rehabilitation (adaptive re-use), restoration (which freezes a period of time and removes evidence of other periods), and reconstruction (which re-creates property for interpretation). Now we have "cultural landscapes," which the Secretary of the Interior defined in 1996 as "a geographic area associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." Not only is the term redundant when it tells us that every landscape is cultural, but it also suggests every landscape has the potential to be saved from the future. What is missing is contemporary design as a means for understanding history and ecology.

In a recent project by the Olin Partnership that changed the nature of Bryant Park in New York City from a dangerous drug haven to a vital public place, questions of rehabilitation and restoration arose. Laurie Olin refused to describe the 13-year project in the National Park Service language of a restoration or rehabilitation. Instead he called it a "transformation." He found the preservation community to hold an oversimplified view of the issues and frequently to advocate positions hostile to change and especially to contemporary design, regardless of quality, while supporting all forms of the past: "Time's arrow," he stated, "moves in one direction."

By contrast, a recent controversy has favored preservation rather than reconstruction in the case of the Dumbarton Oaks garden in Washington, DC, designed by Beatrix Farrand in the 1920s. A proposal in 2000 to build a library under the North Vista's terraced garden created a firestorm of debate until an alternative location for the library was chosen. A significant garden designed by a founding member of the profession could not be destroyed even if it would later be authentically reconstructed.

European landscape architecture tends to follow the 1964 Charter of Venice, which mandates that preservation should retain only exceptional character and that additions should be distinct and carry the stamp of their time. A design will lose its credibility if it seems to be old but is not old. Guido Hager, an historical garden designer in Zurich, Switzerland, believes that the designer's responsibility to a place that has been drastically changed is to design anew so that it can age and achieve something we love about historic places: having history rather than pretending to have history.

On a postindustrial site north of Duisburg, Germany, Latz and Partner transformed a defunct steel plant into a park that draws bicyclists, scuba divers, and rock climbers to the ruins left behind. Fern, rose, and water lily gardens are set within obsolete coal and ore bunkers and cooling-tower pools framed by industrial fragments. According to Peter Latz, "The task of dealing with run-down industrial areas and opencast mines requires a new method that accepts their physical qualities as well as their destroyed nature and topography. This new vision should not be one of restoration, for this approach negates the qualities that they currently possess and destroys them for a second time."

With all the respect for Olmsted that Bostonians tout, they have yet to create a forum that honors his vision instead of emulating his style. By weaving together issues of engineering, ecology, history, and contemporary civic culture, we can make the Emerald Necklace a world-class public park that continues the real spirit of what Olmsted envisioned more than a century ago.

Gina Crandell is a landscape architect. The former senior editor of *Land Forum*, she teaches at the Rhode Island School of Design.

photos: © Michael Latz

Transformed industrial [illegible] in Duisburg, Germany

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Land Fear:
Wildness and the Bewilderment of the City Dweller

by John Stilgoe

Suburbs end where streetlights end. On moonless nights, rural America is dark. Not gloomy. Dark. Despite modern halogen headlights, many metropolitan motorists dislike driving away from rural Interstate highways themselves almost bereft of streetlights.Why do rural and wilderness roads become almost sinister after sundown? Perhaps the dark crowds the car. Perhaps the dark landscape snuggles too closely. Uninvited intimacy disturbs and disgusts when it does not confuse or terrify.

"Bewilderment" once meant mind-numbing fear caused by wild beasts. In Old English, "wylder" designated all wild animals dangerous to people; "ness" identified the lair of such creatures, as it still does at Loch Ness. Atop Old English terms squat words dating from after the Roman conquest. "Panic" means the shoving aside of mental clarity by Pan, and "pandemonium" designates the terrifying sounds wayfarers once heard in forests away from houses, inns, and villages. Europeans brought the whole wilderness concept to North America, where it thrives still. Indeed, mind-numbing fear of wild beasts may be on the increase among bewildered city dwellers and suburbanites, who worry about deer ticks carrying Lyme disease, mosquitoes infected with West Nile fever, coyotes feasting on the family cat, even mountain lions stalking children.

By the 1850s urban growth produced a new bewilderment involving country people disoriented in cities, especially after dark. Nathaniel Hawthorne focused on the mindset in a short story, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," as did Herman Melville in a novel, *Pierre*. Nowadays rarely read, these narratives were among the first to focus on nighttime cities as psychological wilderness. George Foster's *1850 New York by Gas-Light: With Here and There a Streak of Sunshine* produced a string of successors like James McCabe's 1872 *Lights and Shadows of New York Life*, but only scholars intrigued by urban architecture, crime, artificial lighting, and disorientation know them. Far better known are the opposite works from around 1900, in which urban-reared people grow bewildered in alien rural and wilderness darkness or fields or forest. Edith Wharton analyzed such bewilderment in her 1911 novel *Ethan Frome* and in another almost forgotten one published six years later, *Summer*. Now an increasingly urban national population fears any intimacy with uncontrolled nature, especially darkness, vast expanses, cold, and wet.

Darkness shrivels the psyche simply because too few urban Americans exercise hearing, smell, and touch outdoors. Medical-school scientists and other scholars interested in healthful environments now suspect that sensory deprivation produces all sorts of illness: we are too visual to be healthy. In "Beyond Toxicity: Human Health and the Natural Environment" in *The American Journal of Preventive Medicine* (April 2001), Howard Frumkin demonstrates that direct contact with the natural realm improves health, helps cure physical and mental illness, and may improve intelligence. My contribution to that issue, "Gone Barefoot Lately?" focuses on the long-term design implications of many issues he analyzes. Underlying the medical and design research is the hypothesis Edmund O. Wilson presented in his 1989 *Biophilia: The Human Bond with Other Species*: humans need nature in more than aesthetic and other cultural ways. (See facing page for other related texts.) All the related design-focused writing involves medical and sociological research ranging from the biochemistry of fear to early 20th-century medical warnings about urban sensory overstimulation to late 20th-century findings about the causes of depression. The biophilia hypothesis, however, shifted research away from the visual toward far more encompassing paradigms involving the ways human senses respond to a wide range of environmental stimuli. Modern urban life tends to reduce such response: a society intrigued by deodorizing itself may unwittingly weaken response processes that contribute to health. Not surprisingly, developers of resorts and similar concatenations of space and structure prove remarkably intrigued by such research.

But our instinctive biophilia has been challenged by growing biophobia and distrust of the outdoors. Sedentary, indoor lifestyles coupled with some medical research have fostered the weird situation in which our instinctive fear of the dark is now matched by a fear of the sun. Yet medical researchers have suspected for decades that indoor living, and especially the

photo: Judy Kohn

ingestion of artificial light, may produce serious health consequences. Women's breast cancer rates vary by latitude in the United States: the rate is lower in sunny cities like Phoenix and Fort Lauderdale and higher in cloudy northern cities like Bangor and Cleveland. Some federal authorities advise women to expose neck and shoulders to sunlight for 15 minutes every day, something not especially comfortable in winter-chilled places. Relationships among breast- and skin-cancer rates, casual sunbathing, and even spending part of every noontime outside now vex advice-givers wary of offering conflicting guidelines. If sunbathing forestalls and even cures depression in ways tanning-salon equipment cannot match, savvy adults learn to evaluate multiple risks. Resort developers think about designing according to Frumkin's findings, and backers of planned residential communities wonder if healthfulness will dominate middle-income buyer thinking as it already shapes upper-class decision-making.

Indeed, class matters: socio-economic status affects the way we think about nature. Traditionally educated upper-class children learn differently about body-nature-space relations: their formal and informal education emphasizes outdoor activity. Urban public school educators tend to keep children indoors, while private-school and home-schooled children are sent outside. The difference is physical as well as cultural. For example, newly arrived English colonists correctly thought African slaves did better in Georgia heat and humidity than they. But their reasoning was wrong; it turned out that the children of English settlers did as well as the Africans, simply because intense physical activity in high-heat, high-humidity environments activates all sweat glands in prepubescent children of any race. After puberty, however, no matter how hot and humid subsequent environments, dormant glands remain so; the adult will never be comfortable in such circumstances. Children who play and explore the outdoors grow up to be adults able to enjoy vigorous outdoor activity in heat and humidity, while other children grow up not merely liking air conditioning, but demanding it while not knowing why.

Controlled indoor environments stimulate a taste for controlled outdoor environments. Skiers demand groomed slopes; the few ski areas that offer only natural conditions are considered quaint, if not economically doomed. Air-conditioning is now common on sailboats with homeports south of Annapolis. Even "adventure tours" — biking and walking vacations — typically feature chase vehicles so participants can escape to the comforts of a luxury van if the terrain or the weather become unpleasant. That which we cannot control makes us anxious.

University education ignores circa-1850 writing about country people finding cities confusing. Instead, today's faculty focus on the 1900-era urban dislike of rural and wilderness places, thus infecting yet another generation with a cultural fear of nature. For every thousand undergraduate readers of *Ethan Frome*, professors find only one reader of *Pierre*. But lately students extrapolating from healthful diets and regular physical exercise encounter the biophilia hypothesis and begin to wonder if depression and other illnesses do not originate in avoided intimacy with nature. Some are even questioning their own fears: Is walking down a pitch-dark rural road an activity that strengthens the senses and restores the psyche? ■■■

Author of *Outside Lies Magic* and other books, John Stilgoe is Orchard Professor in the History of Landscape at Harvard University.

Related reading:

Stanley Milgram
"The Experience of Living in Cities," in *Science* (March 1970)

Yi-Fu Tuan
***Topophilia* (1974)**
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Stephen Kaplan and Rachel Kaplan (editors)
***Humanscape: Environments for People* (1982)**

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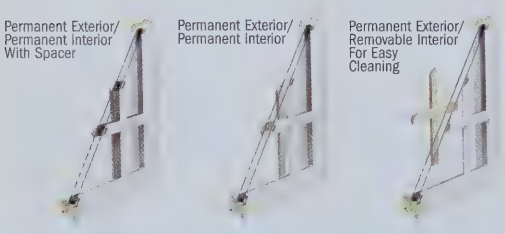

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Alex MacLean: The Landscape of Play

by Elizabeth Padjen FAIA

photo © Alex MacLean, Landslides

Alex MacLean is the principal of Landslides in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has piloted his Cessna 182 over much of the United States documenting the American landscape. His photographs have been exhibited internationally and have been acquired by many corporate, private, public, and university collections. He is the author of *Look at the Land: Aerial Reflections on America*, and the co-author of *Taking Measures across the American Landscape and Above and Beyond: Visualizing Change in Small Towns and Rural Areas*. He is currently at work on a book that will examine the landscape of human play.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA [illegible]
ArchitectureBoston

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Many landscape architects today urge us to look beyond our traditional understanding of landscape — gardens, parks, plazas — to consider all forms of manipulated ground as landscape. Perhaps no one makes the case more clearly than photographer Alex MacLean. His astonishing, beautiful, aerial images document the myriad ways we make our presence known across the land.

The "landscape of play" is, of course, a centuries-old notion; recreation and healthful repose in nature are concepts deeply embedded in the human psyche. What is different today is how and where we play. We invent new games and new recreations and, increasingly, we invent new places to accommodate them, places that are often aggressively *un*-natural. At-home batting cages nudge out vegetable gardens. Paddle-tennis platforms dot suburbia. Kiddie trampolines beat out the backyard pool. And woe to the community without a skateboard park.

photos pp. 24-25 © Alex MacLean, Landslides

above:
Scottsdale 36-hole track and megagolf,
Panama City, Florida

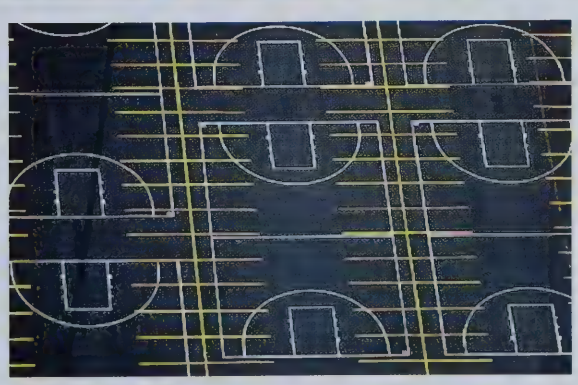
right:
Six baseball diamonds in Central Park,
New York City

Our new recreations celebrate speed, risk, and exhilaration. Study these new landscapes of play and imagine some future archaeologist who will declare that ours was a society fixated on winning and losing, on dominating both the land and our competition. That archaeologist probably won't know that we were also a society of birdwatchers, hikers, loafers, and dreamers. ■■■

Top:
[illegible]
Orlando, Florida

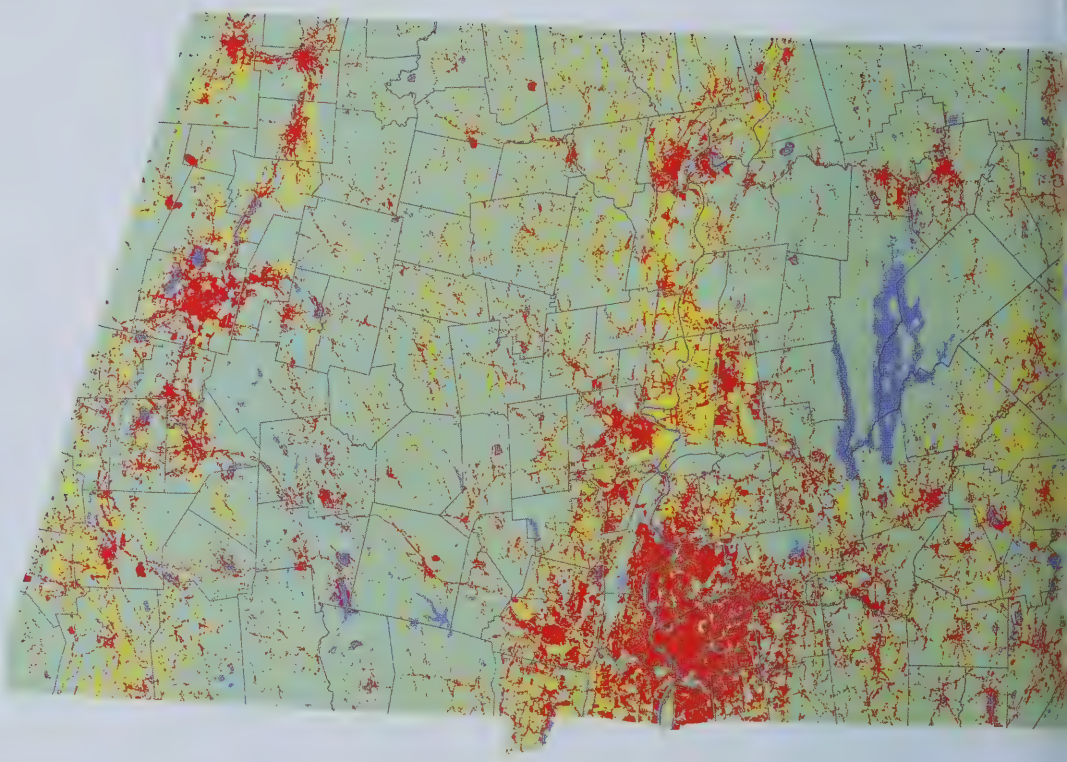
Bottom left:
Basketball courtlines over-
getting fa-gnd
Wannan, Massachusetts

Bottom right:
Time warm-ups in playground
[illegible]
West Palm, New York



How Much Land is Left?

by Oliver Gillham AIA



MASSACHUSETTS LAND USE, 1999
Map courtesy of Massachusetts Geographic Information System

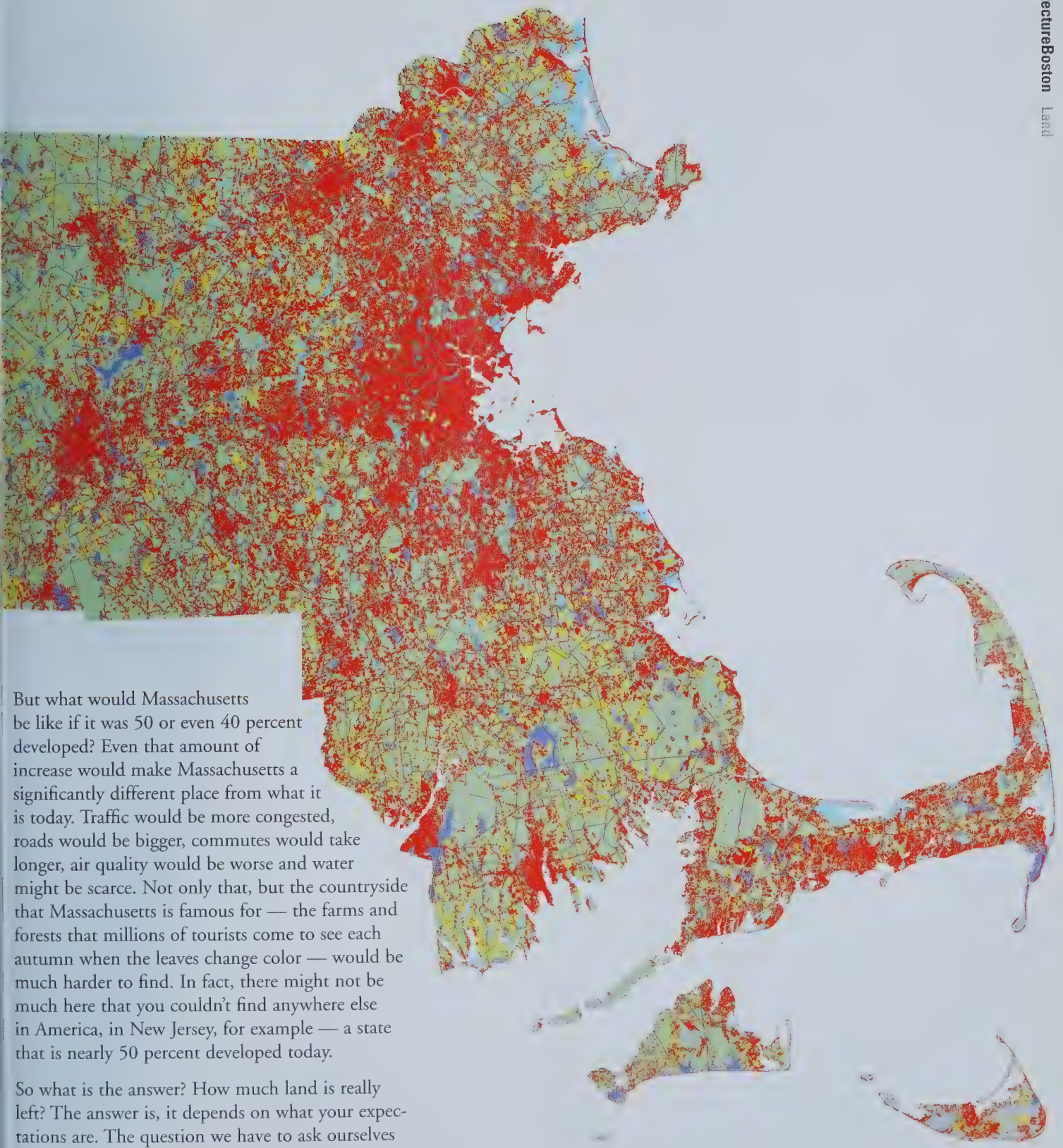
- DEVELOPED LAND
- AGRICULTURAL LAND
- FOREST
- WETLAND
- OTHER
- WATER

Each day, more and more people are waking up to find new tract housing, shopping malls, and parking lots right next door. The open fields and woodlots that used to be a part of many neighborhoods are being consumed by new suburban growth — a phenomenon many call urban sprawl. Those who are concerned about it often cite alarming figures. For example, we are told that the US is losing nearly 400 acres of open space to new development each hour, and that New England alone is losing farmland and forest at the rate of 1,200 acres per week. Those numbers are so terrifying that it is little wonder that loss of open space has become a top issue among many voters. According to a National Association of Realtors poll, 88 percent of Americans now favor preserving open space from new development. That is a lot of concerned people.

But alarming figures and worried people don't necessarily make vanishing open space a real issue. In fact, America still has a lot of land. Only about 6 percent of the United States is actually developed — and that statistic doesn't even include Alaska. At current development rates, some analysts have estimated that it would take at least 15 years to add another percentage point to that number. If that is true, it would take nearly 300 years to develop just 25 percent of the territory of the contiguous United States, and that's a very long time indeed. So what's all the fuss about?

Well, the truth is, how much land is left depends a lot on where you live. Most Americans (about 80 percent of them) live in metropolitan areas. And it is in metropolitan areas that land is scarcest and where the next 1 percent of development will actually occur — not out in the Great Plains or atop the snowbound peaks of the Rocky Mountains. The fact is that a 1 percent increase in developed land nationally can mean a 20 percent increase in developed metropolitan land area — and that can seem like a lot of land, especially when it's right next door to where most of the nation lives.

This phenomenon can have serious consequences in a place like Massachusetts. Unlike the rest of America, Massachusetts is not just 6 percent developed. About a quarter of the developable land in Massachusetts has already been used up, and, according to the US Department of Agriculture, the state could be as much as 86 percent developed by 2050. True, 50 years is still a relatively long time, and a lot can happen between now and then. Prices will probably go up as land gets scarce, and protest will almost certainly get louder. Most likely, the state will never even come close to that level of development.



But what would Massachusetts be like if it was 50 or even 40 percent developed? Even that amount of increase would make Massachusetts a significantly different place from what it is today. Traffic would be more congested, roads would be bigger, commutes would take longer, air quality would be worse and water might be scarce. Not only that, but the countryside that Massachusetts is famous for — the farms and forests that millions of tourists come to see each autumn when the leaves change color — would be much harder to find. In fact, there might not be much here that you couldn't find anywhere else in America, in New Jersey, for example — a state that is nearly 50 percent developed today.

So what is the answer? How much land is really left? The answer is, it depends on what your expectations are. The question we have to ask ourselves is not how much land is left, but rather, what kind of place do we want to live in tomorrow, or next year, or 10 years from now? Ultimately, that is up to us. If we don't do anything, Massachusetts may be a far more suburban state in the future than it is today. ■■■

Oliver Gillham AIA is an architect and planner based in Richmond, Massachusetts. He is the author of *The Limitless City: A Primer on the Urban Sprawl Debate* (Island Press, 2002), available from the BSA: www.architects.org

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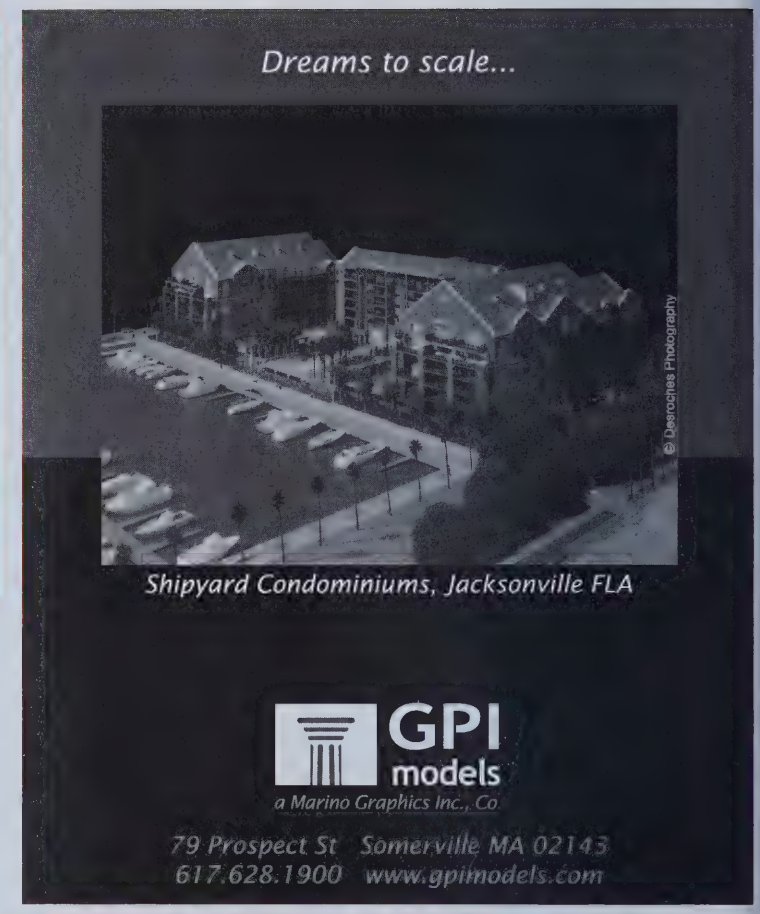

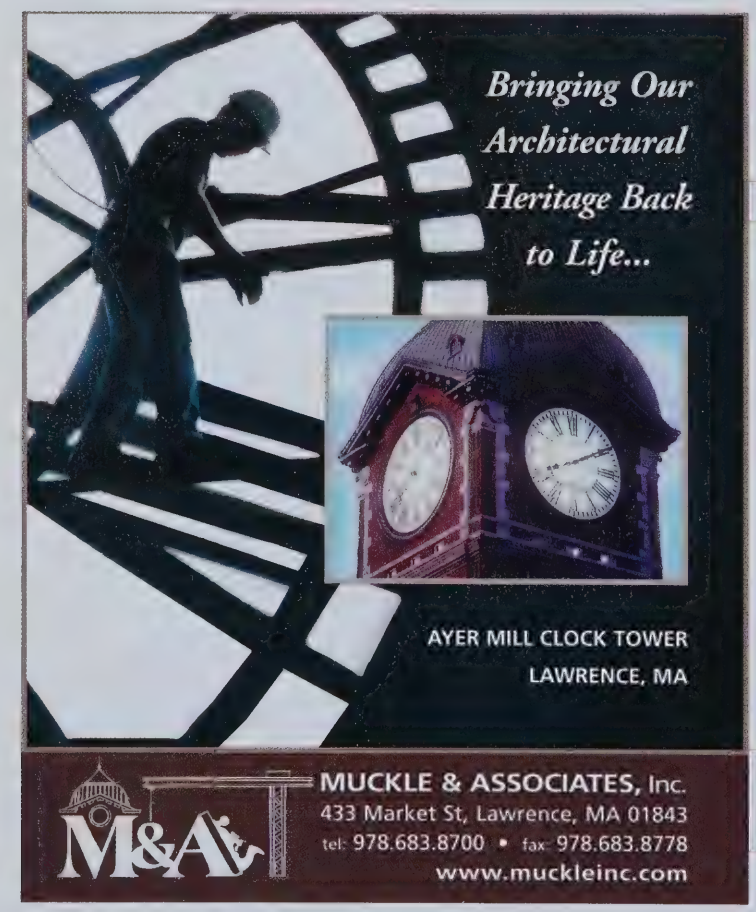

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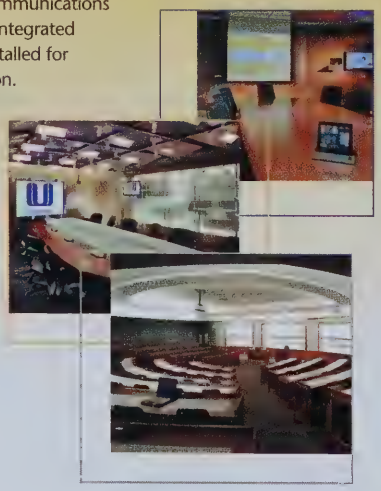

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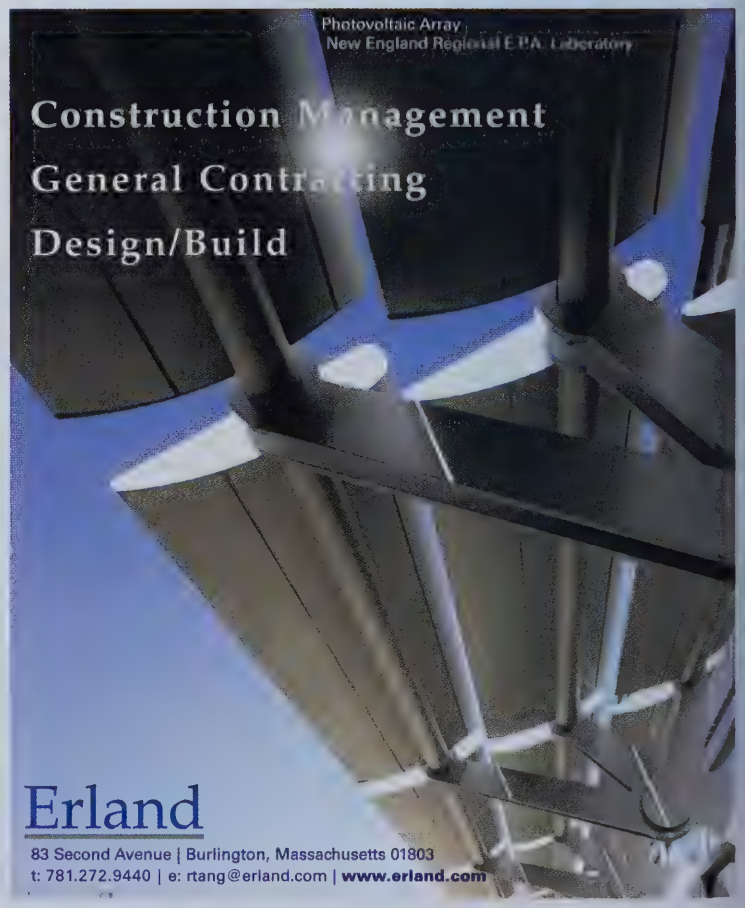

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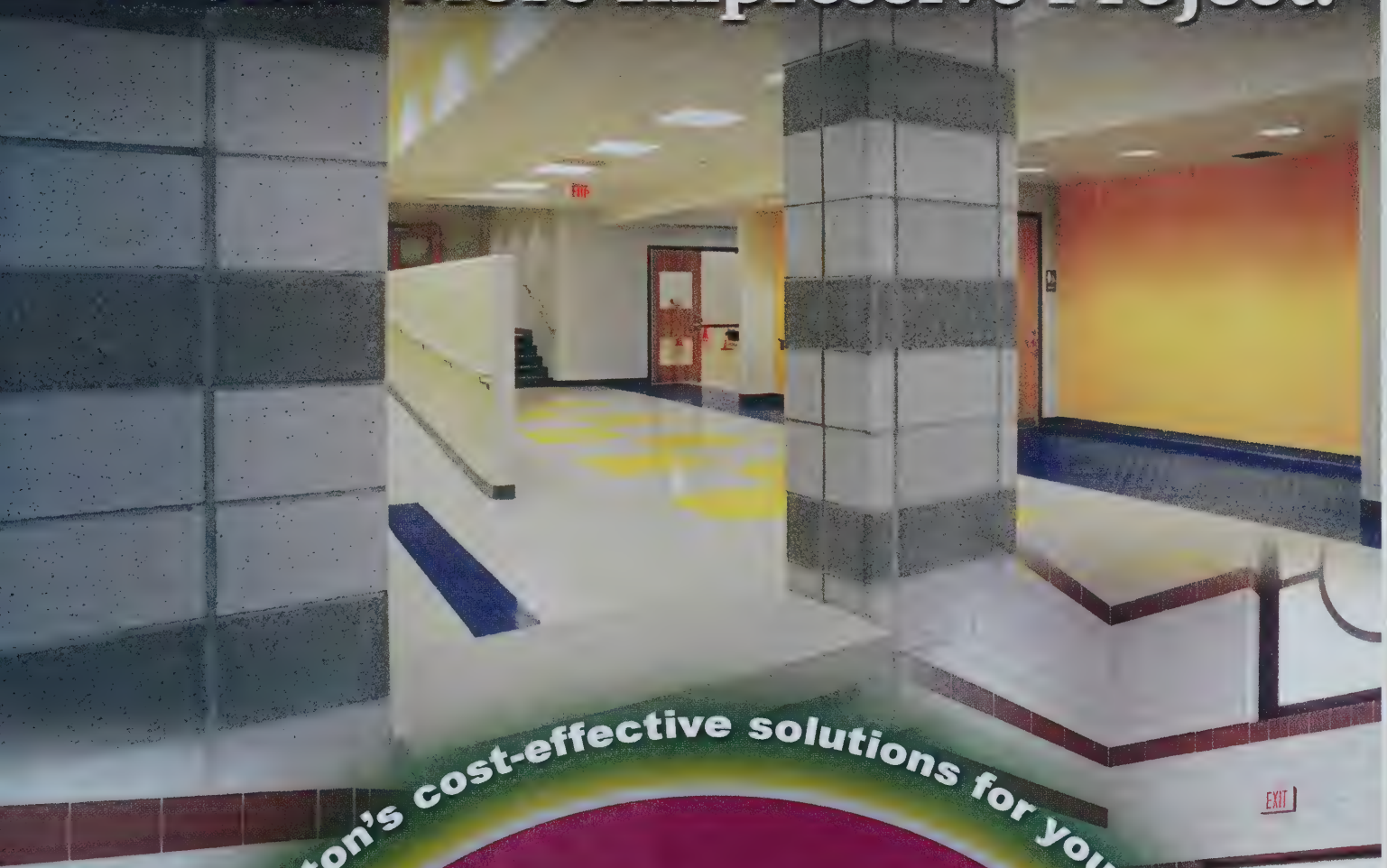

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Land Marks:

Martha Schwartz talks with Nina James

Martha Schwartz, a landscape architect and artist, is the principal of Martha Schwartz, Inc. in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and an adjunct professor of landscape architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. She is the recipient of numerous awards and prizes including a fellowship from the Urban Design Institute, several design awards from the American Society of Landscape Architects, and visiting residencies at Radcliffe College and the American Academy in Rome. She has lectured both nationally and internationally about the landscape, and her work has been featured widely in publications as well as gallery exhibitions.

Nina James, PhD, is the Mellon Fellow in Landscape Studies at Smith College, where she teaches in Smith's new landscape studies program. She previously taught in the department of art at Smith and held research positions in the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Her research work focuses on British and American modern landscapes, socialized spaces, and women in landscape architecture.

urtesy Martha Schwartz Inc

NINA JAMES: In conversations with design professionals, both architects and landscape architects, I sense that landscape architecture is often relegated to a sort of secondary status — not only by architects, but also by clients. Is there a lack of understanding about what landscape architects can contribute to the built environment?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: That is an important issue. I think architects and the profession of architecture are really myopic. The idea that there's a master designer — a master artist — is still being taught. The issues and challenges surrounding the landscape, meaning everything outside the building, are so extensive and so complex that the idea that architects would have a handle on all of it is absurd. But because of their self-image of being the master artist, architects feel that anything outside the building is secondary. My point of view is that architecture is actually secondary, because I think the design of the land is the most important design issue we have on our table in the 21st century. The design of specific buildings, as interesting and valuable as that is, is not particularly useful in terms of solving the biggest problems that we have, such as urban sprawl. The way that we use the land in terms of development is something that can't be solved by architecture.

NINA JAMES: These issues are bigger than just architecture alone.

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: They certainly are bigger. I have a lot of sympathy for the issues that architects have to deal with and for the strength that they need in order to get anything of substance done. But the issues are too big for them to design their way out of. The issues today are political, they're economic, they're cultural, and there is no way that architects can control or even know the vast amount of information you need to deal with landscape. Landscape architecture is its own profession. We have a hard enough time trying to teach our own students what they need to know to go out and be useful. So the idea that somehow it's a subset of architecture and that it can be taught under the wing of architecture is an antiquated idea.

NINA JAMES: So it starts with educating the architect?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: The positioning of architects as master designers has to be revisited along with the role of collaboration and training. A lot of visually oriented people don't see the landscape as an appropriate place for design. And those attitudes run within the field of landscape architecture as well, which is why we as a profession give mixed signals as to what it is that we're doing. One way of thinking about it is that we're taught that a good landscape is a landscape where you don't see the hand of man. That's also our picture of who we are as a culture — the idea of living in a beautiful wilderness. And the wilderness is not a designed entity. It's nature. So what opportunities are there to design the landscape? Those people who are ambitious to design and who have egos and want to exercise those egos don't see the landscape as a good place for that. They'd rather go into architecture, where that behavior is appropriate.

NINA JAMES: It sounds like a problem rooted not just in our culture, but in individual personalities.

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: Let me put it this way: the environment that we're living in now is a design problem. We're no longer living in an environment that is defined by nature. We're living in an environment that's defined by us and how we use it, and therefore it's a design issue. We must bring form and meaning and value to it through our imagination. And yet people get stuck in this very romantic idea about what landscapes must be. That's true here in the United States and here in New England, in particular. Europe is doing a much, much better job in terms of making contemporary landscapes that deal with urbanization and suburbanization.

NINA JAMES: Why are Europeans more receptive to contemporary design?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: I think one reason is that they are much more secure in their sense of history. They can make a clean break between what's old and what's new. In the United States, the idea of creating new things that look old seems attractive, whereas in Europe that would be laughable. Also, art and design infuse everyday life in Europe in a way that Americans don't quite understand. Europeans want a good quality of life that they know design and art can bring. And they're willing to pay for it. I feel like the United States has been in some kind of retrograde motion for the last 10 years in terms of thinking about the future. In particular, thinking about the landscape is not seen as being very important. Our landscape is no longer nature, but as a culture we're reluctant to give that notion up.

NINA JAMES: Is it because we're so focused on details and the landscape is really a sweeping panorama? It's just too big for Americans to focus on?

photo courtesy Martha Schwartz Inc.

The Grotto
City of Commerce, California
Design: Martha Schwartz, Inc.

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: It's because of our fantasy about the landscape. "Panorama" pretty much captures that fantasy. It's this big, sweeping, gorgeous, tree-filled, river-filled, Hudson River Valley painting that we're living in. It's the Marlboro Man. That fantasy of nature sells over and over again. It's used to market all sorts of things because it appeals to our self-image. But the city isn't that, and the edges of the city aren't that, and the strip isn't that. Nothing is really like that unless you go to a national park. Everybody immediately thinks of Yosemite when you say landscape. Nobody thinks about the parking lot at Wal-Mart as the landscape, but that *is* the landscape. That's more our landscape than Yosemite.

NINA JAMES: I have my students read J.B. Jackson just so they can understand the importance of what he calls "ad hoc public spaces," because when they come to our landscape studies program at Smith, they usually come to it through an interest in gardens. And on day one I say this isn't just about gardens. It's about parking lots. It's about malls.

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: Right. It's all that stuff that we do out there. And it's about our future — how our land is being used. One of the other reasons why the Europeans are doing it better is that they have created pressure. They have more people per square inch. The density causes them to be advocates for the land. Germany is eight times as dense as we are. But we will have used up our available land way before we ever populate the United States with that density. If we wait until that point, we really won't have anything left except that which has walls around it — the national parks. So the question in this country becomes, what is our role as educators and practitioners? We're going to have to get smarter faster if we don't want to see the land used in the way it is. Now, I'm bringing my values to this. You can find some theoreticians and writers and economists who say, well, hey, the strip is great. That there's democracy in the strip and that sprawl is something that everybody wants. You know — everybody wants the American dream, everybody wants a three-car garage, everybody wants a parking space at the mall, and in fact, that is true. It is a very pure expression of economics. But it looks terrible, and these spaces are degrading.

NINA JAMES: Are you able to bring these values into the classroom? Are you able to impart some sort of advocacy through design?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: I hope so. The classroom may be the only place where I have any kind of effect. When you're hired, it's harder because you're up against values that other people carry with them. And you're often arguing over a very limited amount of resources, and you're arguing against architects who need a piece of it. It is the same thing over and over again. People tell you how much they love nature, but when it comes to paying the bill for the environment, they basically care very little about it. They don't want to tangle with issues around

design. They don't have enough money in the budget for the landscape. They don't want to spend money on maintaining it. We can talk about sustainability and the ability of the project to last over time, but if you're given $7 a square foot to make a major civic plaza, that's less money than you put on your bathroom floor, and no, it won't last. If it were up to me, I'd put stone in every project because stone lasts. I love concrete, but I can't tell you that it's going to last as long as stone, no matter how well it's crafted. I have this discussion over and over again: Number one, you don't have enough money for the landscape. Number two, you don't have enough people who are going to maintain anything. And if you don't have any maintenance and if you don't have enough money, then number three: you're not going to be able to build anything that is going to last. The budget is a cultural value.

NINA JAMES: And yet people's interest can endow a landscape in another way. I think of a place like Birkenhead Park in England, which historians like me study as the first publicly funded park. There's trash and graffiti and vandalism throughout the park and yet it's as populated now as it probably was when it opened in the 1840s.

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: Sustainability isn't just about ecological systems that somehow are able to repeat themselves endlessly. There's a cultural aspect, too. If the culture is not interested in what is built, it will not be sustained. So even if you have a self-cleaning, self-perpetuating park or plaza, if it's not of interest to people, it will not be kept and all the energy and effort and resources brought to building the project will be torn out and redone. It has to be of service. The question of sustainability needs to include a question about how well the design is going to survive culturally.

NINA JAMES: And a question about what we value.

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: It seems like there is such an obvious value in public spaces like Birkenhead Park, yet we don't seem to collectively value them. I wonder whether the value for nature is becoming more of an abstracted kind of fantasy in our heads than in any actual place. A trip to the nature store or images on a screen-saver or buying a T-shirt made out of recycled materials — these things are becoming a replacement for any real relationship that we have with nature. People don't like to see designed landscapes. They want it natural. And so these "natural" landscapes appear in the most unlikely places — on top of garages and on top of bridges and it's all a way of slathering the balm on a wound to make you feel better. The Dutch are much better about viewing their landscape as something that's built, because they dredge it out of the ocean and they actually build the landscape. They know they have to design it, and so they've developed a landscape culture and an architectural culture that is much more advanced than we have, because they haven't had our mythology to deal with.

NINA JAMES: But Bostonians have done that, too — dredged and created the land. Why don't they share something closer to the Dutch design culture? Boston hasn't been a very hospitable locale for you in terms of design — perhaps it's harder to design in your own back yard

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: Talking about Boston is hard. I love Boston. It's a great place to live. It's a great place to raise your children. It's a beautiful little city. And yes, it makes me sad that, in fact, there's so little interface with the enormous amount of design talent that runs through this city. Boston at this point is notorious for being a black hole for design and designers, not just me. It has not always had a tradition of being anti-design or being so retrograde, but right now what I hear is, "Boston is an historic city." Yes, it's historic, but it's not exactly the oldest city around. And yet Bostonians feel that they have something of particular value here, which they do. But what that should allow them to do is to reach more aggressively into the future. I've worked in Orlando, Florida, where they wanted a historic plaza in the middle of the downtown. Now, they've been there for 15 minutes and their historic courtyard is a concrete Neoclassical building that was built in the '30s. It's clear that what they were asking for was an imported history; one guy said, "When I see it, I'll know if it's history." You might be able to understand that in Orlando, but here in Boston, where they have the tradition of architecture schools and landscape architecture schools, where they have *real* history, this is a place where the contemporary and historical could easily live side by side. But I don't think that Boston has anybody at the leadership level who actually feels design can positively impact the environment here, and that's the sad truth. The universities could and should do more to be able to support architecture and landscape architecture, but they don't, because they're their own fiefdoms. It's ironic — there was a period in Boston where Modernism and contemporary architecture existed, but that tradition has been basically put in a closet. Instead, people are focused on the tradition of the old Georgian brick context.

NINA JAMES: Can we revitalize that Modern tradition with projects like City Hall Plaza?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: I think that the plaza could be solved as a landscape problem, not as an architectural development problem. I testified against the proposal to put a hotel on the site. People turn to architecture for solving these urban problems and what do you get? More buildings. My vote would be to just shelve it for right now — don't do anything if you can't figure it out. But the answer will have something to do with the activity around the edges. You can't make things happen through design. People make things

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Mesa Arts and Entertainment Center
Mesa, Arizona

Design: Martha Schwartz, Inc.

happen. But I don't know how to change the environment here, which is pretty hostile to design and certainly hostile to contemporary design. You would have to have a mayor who was really ambitious in terms of creating spaces and buildings that were of design significance. Mayors are very, very important people in terms of envisioning what a city can be and setting the tone for what happens in the city. And you would need people who were sitting on the various boards and committees here who knew about art, architecture, and design and were given a charge to go and seek those designs that reflect contemporary thought and were able to make those kinds of choices. But Boston is disturbingly a black hole for contemporary design in anything.

NINA JAMES: Do you think that same thinking is at work on the Central Artery?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: I think that the Central Artery Project will be hacked to death. The quality of that open space was never questioned. Nobody ever really thought to determine what that open space was going to look like. It's probably going to look very humdrum. That's my prediction and it's because the aspirations were set so low.

NINA JAMES: Can you think of any American cities that are doing a lot of contemporary work, really changing the face of their landscape and improving it to suit the needs of the coming century?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: That's a good question. I haven't really been working that much in the United States, but I think Portland, Oregon is very conscious about its architecture and its open spaces. There are a lot of interesting designers up there. San Francisco has some interesting work. Minneapolis has always had a tradition of putting a lot of effort into public space. We're working in Mesa, Arizona, which has brought in good architects for a performing arts center in the downtown core area. They're really invested in doing it right.

NINA JAMES: What about contemporary designers? Do you find anyone working today as inspirational as, say, Isamu Noguchi was to you earlier in your career?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: Oh yes, absolutely, but by and large they're not in the United States. There are some good designers in the States, but most of the contemporary work that's being done is abroad. I would say it's even true for the art world now. We're losing our edge. We seem to be a little lost culturally.

NINA JAMES: It's surprising because you have equated a healthy culture with a healthy society, and yet we're a relatively healthy society if you judge us against other countries. We are certainly politically powerful. Why aren't we culturally powerful? Why don't we have that clarity of voice?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: Well, because we don't have clarity of voice. I am a very big patriot and my disillusionment is because I think we could be doing a lot better. I love that we have a tremendous amount of diversity and that our culture reflects that. But I think that it's impossible for us to get a general read on what we represent as a country. We were an immigrant country and we remain an immigrant country. It's hard for us to have a single voice about anything. You almost have to see what bubbles up in the broth. And what haven't been bubbling up recently are really wonderful pieces of architecture or urban design or landscape architecture. We seem to have lost our belief in the future. I don't know why. We were kind of goofy — maybe even stupid and naïve — but we believed in science and what science was going to get us. You know — baby formula was going to be the answer to everything and we put those great fins on automobiles. There were a lot of great futuristic ideas, and there weren't so many dark views of the future. I think we're generally much more cautious and not as optimistic.

The sad part is that the way to the future is through education, and we're taking art and music out of educational curriculums because people don't want to pay for them. I think this adds up to why people don't know the value that art and design can bring to a culture. Even those people who are doing well, who we consider successful, don't really have much education in terms of culture and art. There's a lack of understanding of how beauty — the B word — affects our lives and our sense of well-being and that everybody wants it. Everybody would love to lead a life of beauty, whatever that means, as opposed to a life of degradation. And yet that really is not seen as a practical part of one's education. And it shows. It's pretty ugly here. Here in the States, our homes are our castles, but outside that doorstep, there is not much desire to make a collective environment that suits us. We get in our car and hold our nose when we travel through it to get back to our house. But in the end, it degrades all of us.

NINA JAMES: What can change that? Can the profession? Can an institution? What do you think the ASLA [American Society of Landscape Architects] could do, if anything?

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: You're asking a difficult question, and I don't belong to ASLA. I probably should, but I haven't really been given any compelling reasons to join. I think that in general the ASLA represents a good body of professionals, but I think that most of the work that landscape architects do is pretty insignificant. And that's because of the culture — they have not made a very good case about why they are needed and what they do.

NINA JAMES: Some of your strongest critics, if not all of them, come from within the profession.

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: We go through styles, just like architecture — Decon, PoMo. Right now we're onto this kind of eco revelatory stuff, which is just as contrived as anything else. It's the notion that a site must tell the story of its geology, that it has to tell a landscape story, and of course, this is completely insane. Maybe you want to do that once because it makes sense. But the context has to be relevant. And then you have people within the profession who are still appalled by the idea of design in the landscape, because the landscape needs to be saved from people. You find little wars get waged within the profession over that kind of unclarity.
I clearly stand for design.

NINA JAMES: And yet, any profession should be challenged.

MARTHA SCHWARTZ: Absolutely. The editor of *Landscape Architecture* himself said that he doesn't like my stuff, but I'm great fodder for the magazine. The profession absolutely needs to be challenged. Landscape archi–tecture is such an important design field today. There are so many incredible opportunities, and there's so much that needs to be done. Ideally, we should be making things that are culturally significant and that work ecologically and sustainably. There is so much ugly landscape out there. If you were to have every building on the strip designed by a signature architect, you wouldn't change it. Maybe it would make it worse, but it wouldn't really change a damn thing. The landscape is a very, very important topic and I wish that the quality of people involved in it were higher. We're getting people who are more aesthetically oriented, more design oriented, who are more verbal and critical and who could challenge the status quo. Getting people in there who will carry the discussion further and push is very important. It's important to try new things. And that's the worst thing about all this historicism that's happening in Boston. It's stopped progress. You have to be able to try out ideas to go into the future. Looking backwards doesn't take you anywhere. ■■■

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Letter from the Rocky Mountain West

by James A. Murray, PhD

I live in Colorado. You often hear how dry it is; the average yearly precipitation is between one-third and one-fourth that of locations east of the Mississippi River. We are in a drought now. This is not something new for us. Most people know about the drought in the 1930s and the resulting Dust Bowl. In Colorado and New Mexico, the condition lasted the entire decade. Drought occurred again in both the 1950s and 1960s. There was another in the late 1970s. Skip ahead 20 years. In 2000, drought returned and has yet to subside. This past summer, Colorado and Utah recorded their driest 12 months since record-keeping began in 1895, and Wyoming had its second driest.

Arid conditions notwithstanding, our region's population has almost doubled since 1970. Today the population of the six states of the Rocky Mountain West — Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming — is nearly 11 million. The Census Bureau projects 15 million by the year 2020.

The population growth brought with it a proportionate increase in water consumption. You might ask, how was so much additional water supplied from such a dry region? Clearly it does not rain and snow more as the population grows. Was there a large surplus before? No, there was not. Rather, water developers created vast structures for capturing runoff in reservoirs so it could be used here rather than flowing out of the region. They built networks of intermountain tunnels and pipelines for transferring water among basins and through the mountains to population concentrations. Large quantities of water are also being drawn from the region's underground aquifers. These measures met the increased demand — until the drought returned. Last summer, in many locations, water was rationed and water-rights disputes erupted.

Some of the highest rates of residential growth in the region have been in the mountains. New homes have nudged into privately owned wooded sites adjacent to or within the vast tracts of national forest land. This past summer, the ravenous, drought-enhanced wildfires were a powerful threat to residents in these areas. Even when the fires did not destroy homes, the surrounding mountain environment was transformed.

This summer's fires were spectacular media events. We watched as subdivisions were evacuated. We saw firefighters working to exhaustion. There were tanker crashes and pilots killed. We viewed vast tracts of burned acreage. When we were shown the inevitable loss of wildlife and their habitats, we recalled a panicked Bambi running for safety. It was noted that the devastation caused by the wildfires was directly related to the drought. Less noted was that it was also directly related to the proliferation of housing in the forested areas.

The impacts of the wildfires and drought for hikers, campers, hunters, as well as farmers and city dwellers and the water agencies that supply them were less noticed. But these groups were affected, too. Researchers have shown droughts to be among the most costly of all natural disasters.

With the recent reminder of the power of drought, you might think there would be interest in changing development patterns in the region.

So far, this does not seem to be the case. There are strong vested interests in continuing the current rate of growth. Much of the economic prosperity of the region depends on development and construction. Also, there is an undiminished demand for mountain homesites. So, for many, the need is simply to supply more water at a cost that will not slow development. This points toward new water development projects in the mountains. After a 20-year hiatus, there is renewed talk of building new dams and reservoirs, and more trans-mountain diversion systems. Experience indicates that much of the costs could be slipped into the federal budget, thus sparing the consumer higher water prices.

One of the most outrageous proposals targets the mountainous public forests that cover as much as 35 percent of the region and are central to its identity. These contain watersheds that convey the spring runoff from melting snow into surface streams and recharge the underground aquifers. A proposal by the Colorado Department of Natural Resources is to clear-cut 25 percent to 40 percent of the trees in the watersheds. The aim is to reduce the evaporation of snow from the trees, thereby increasing water on the ground and in the stream. Great swaths would be cut into several million acres of federal and state forests to gain 10 to 20 percent more surface runoff. Proponents claim such clear-cutting would also reduce "fuel" for wildfires. Of course it would be a boon for the region's logging industry. Because additional water would only be gained in "wet" years, new reservoirs would be needed as well. If you think this is a joke, consider the response of US Representative Scott McInnis, R-Colo., chairman of the House Forest Health Subcommittee: "With scientific data showing active management can result in more water for Coloradans, this is right near the top of the list of things we need to look at. Heaven knows we can use all the water we can get."

Notably absent in the torrent of ideas are ones sensitive to the carrying capacity of the natural environment here. Periodic drought is a natural phenomenon. If it doesn't snow enough to supply the surface streams and recharge depleted groundwater to support an ever-growing number of residents, perhaps we should think about making a few accommodations to Mother Nature. So far, it seems that the single tactic has been to try to bludgeon her into an altered condition. We could start by getting serious about obvious measures for increasing the efficiency of water use. Green grass is a fixture in lawns here. Irrigation is the single largest water use for municipal systems in the region. Although Xeriscape (landscaping that conserves water) is a well-known alternative for lawns, it is seldom the homeowner's choice. Few homes employ "low flow" appliances, though they are widely advertised. Use of recycled gray water is only occasionally considered, even for irrigation. These measures could conserve enough water to literally save our forests and preserve the vitality of our aquifers, and at the same time allow a reasonable rate of growth.

The greatest obstacle to this common sense approach is the pricing of the water product. Big-project water development in the West is so heavily subsidized that only a fraction of the true costs are included in the price of the water. Water developers do not pay the environmental costs associated with their projects. They pay little or nothing to the government owners of the public land they use. Federal funding is often provided. These subsidies fuel water-dependent economic development with cheap water. Furthermore, with cheap water readily available, there is little incentive for the consumer to conserve.

Once again we are battering Mother Nature. We recently read in this magazine ["Letter from Florida", *ArchitectureBoston*, Spring 2001] about the woes of the state of Florida. The best that could be said about that state is that it has "a tradition of transformation" and that this tradition will help it persevere in the face of the growth-related damage to its natural beauty. Note that a small part of its transformation will be achieved with billions of federal tax dollars to "restore" the Everglades. It is distressing to watch my region follow a similarly insensitive path. At what point will we realize that the pioneer spirit that served us so well in the past must be adjusted? Will it hit home only when we have incalculable restoration costs to bear? ■■■

James A. Murray, PhD, is an urban and environmental economist. He has lived in Colorado for 30 years, working for the cities of Boulder and Denver, and as a private consultant. He earned advanced degrees from Harvard University and University of Oregon.

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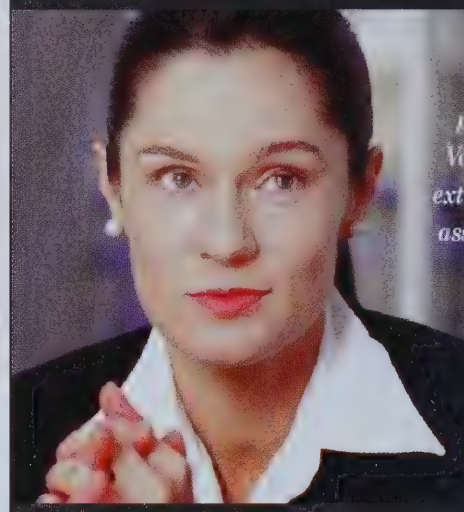

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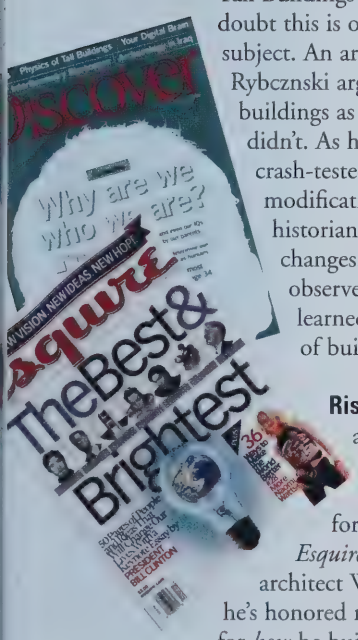
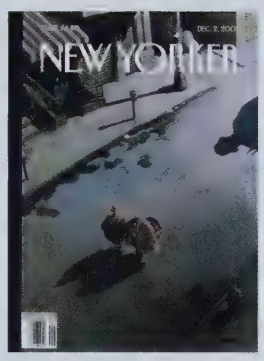
Periodical roundup

by Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA

Standing tall... With all the recent talk of cable bridges and tall buildings, ever wonder what it'd be like to construct them? In *The New Yorker* (December 2, 2002), Gay Talese takes us to the men who built and now maintain the big structures of New York, especially the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. With both deference and awe, through anecdote and interview, Talese's "On the Bridge" tells a very human tale of the people who created these extraordinary city-shaping structures. From a somewhat different and markedly less nostalgic point of view, Witold Rybczynski writes of some of the same tall structures in *Discover* (October 2002) magazine. The title says it best: "What We Learned about Tall Buildings from the World Trade Center Collapse." No doubt this is one of countless articles emerging on the subject. An architect writing in a popular science magazine, Rybcznski argues for full disclosure so we can use the buildings as case-studies, to learn what worked and what didn't. As he points out, buildings, unlike cars, can't be crash-tested before use. He speculates on imminent modifications to our building codes, as Rybczynski-the-historian reminds us of similar catastrophe-inspired changes. Making a case for lower buildings, he observes that "the most important lesson we've learned is that we have underestimated the real cost of building skyscrapers."



Rising stars... Bill Clinton introduces "The Best and the Brightest," the 43 men and women who are "changing our world," according to *Esquire* magazine (December 2002).(The former president and Hilary were honored in *Esquire*'s 1984 list, while still unknowns.) New York architect William Massie makes the new list. Notably, he's honored not for his forms nor for his personality, but for *how* he builds. As Reed Kroloff explains, Massie "has devised a new computer-driven building process that could finally make quality architecture affordable." Kroloff argues that Massie's work — "customized pre-fab" — critiques both the building industry's standardization and architects' custom design. Massie's house designs, for example, incorporate smaller parts that he often manufactures himself on computer-driven laser cutting and milling machines. The parts are delivered and assembled on site "like a giant puzzle." The cost of one such piece, a rolling-contour, custom concrete sink? $40. Home Depot can't beat that. Kroloff comments, "The direct connection between architect and building is something the profession has never had."



Big Green... In *Wired* (October 2002), Josh McHugh reports on Dartmouth's newly wireless campus: "The wireless network is changing life at Dartmouth," he writes in "Unplugged U." Most students have laptops, and all are "connected," whether in the library, the pizza shop, or a park bench on the Hanover green. Omnipresent e-mail communication renders cell phones virtually obsolete. Dartmouth is one of a dozen campuses nationally experimenting with a wireless network. As McHugh notes, "The network is subtly but profoundly altering teaching techniques, social interaction, study habits, and personal security." Faculty and students give it rave reviews. Is this the way of the future? The spatial, architectural, and urban implications are still to be seen.

And speaking of green... The same issue of *Wired* also offers a fascinating ode to all things Pantone. (Remember the old days of colored film that stuck to everything but the desired drawing?) In "Living Color," J.C. Hertz describes the company's 1940s beginnings as a standardizer of lipstick and nail-polish hues to its current, extraordinarily scientific system of color definition, sold to us in color wheels and swatch books, and now embedded in every major computer graphics program. "If color is a language, Pantone is the *Oxford English Dictionary*," writes Hertz, and its system ensures that Starbucks Green is the same in Somerville, Seattle, and Shanghai. Hertz reports that Pantone has recently turned its expertise into profitable predictions, advising designers what the next hot new color will be: "Across all industries, billions and billions of dollars ride on color decisions." Big Brother meets Technicolor? ■■■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA teaches the architecture studios at Smith College and maintains a practice in Boston.

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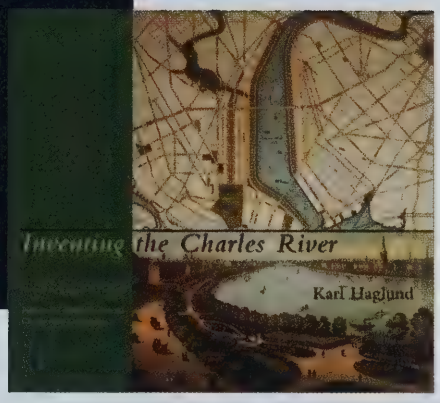
Books
Inventing the Charles River

by Karl T. Haglund
MIT Press, 2002

Reviewed by Max Page



Most Bostonians know something about the extensive landfill that filled out the narrow peninsula that was Boston in the 17th and 18th centuries. But even the most knowledgeable are likely to be ignorant of most of Karl Haglund's vast research showing how utterly man-made is the thing we call the Charles River. Once we are jolted out of the unconscious belief that the river is a "natural" landscape, *Inventing the Charles River* makes it hard to think about the Charles in the same way again. From a series of often-fetid mudflats and salt marshes has come haltingly over three centuries, a grand public space, one of the defining features of Boston's landscape. This has been urban renewal on a scale of which Robert Moses would have been proud.

Haglund, the project manager for the New Charles River Basin at the Metropolitan District Commission, tells this story through the remarkable series of proposals for "refining" the river basin. It is a remarkably comprehensive history of the series of planning visions, many on paper, and others made reality. (It is also, at times, too comprehensive: Haglund spends far too much time narrating planning projects that are only tangentially related to the river.) Some are fascinating flights of imagination in their own right. In 1844, for example, Robert Gourley, a Scottish visitor, drew what became Boston's first comprehensive plan: a vast reorganization of the city around a transportation network with a new island in the middle of the Charles at the heart of the scheme. In 1907, Ralph Adams Cram proposed the creation of a new island, what he called St. Botolph's, where Bostonians would find a grand cathedral and, at the other end of a grand axis, a new municipal building for the modern metropolis.

The most powerful theme that runs beneath Haglund's chronological history is the fitful story of the very idea of a great public space. Haglund reminds us that the vast majority of the riverfront was held in private hands well into the 20th century; in 1893 only 65 of the 224 miles of river banks in greater Boston were in public ownership. Before the Charles River could become that most cherished of Boston's open spaces, "the river had to be reimagined as a public space." This was not a simple process: it took new attitudes toward the natural landscape, new notions of government's role in American life, the power of charismatic individuals, important legal developments, and the pressure of traffic planning to lead to the creation of this public space. In our present age that has seen virtually every type of space and institution privatized, the development of a powerful belief in public spaces for the enactment of public life is something worth reflecting upon.

This book was published in cooperation with the Charles River Conservancy. It shows, in good ways and in bad. The support from the Conservancy surely made possible the large number of beautiful illustrations — there are close to 400 images, many in color — and the generous layout of the pages. The book is, without apology, a work of scholarly boosterism, celebrating "Boston's great public space." All this is made clear in the final pages, as Haglund takes his readers on a floating tour down the Charles, accompanied by contemporary and historic photographs of each landmark alongshore, and rounded out with a postscript from the Charles River Conservancy. A subversive book this is not.

And yet, *Inventing the Charles River* will likely cause some consternation among those who wish to preserve and improve the Charles River. By focusing on the ways the Charles has been invented and reinvented, Haglund subtly poses some very difficult questions about the very idea of "preserving" the river, indeed about the very idea of preservation. For what, exactly, is "historic" or even "authentic" about the Charles that needs to be "conserved"? Many of the best-loved spaces are quite recent and are the result of massive transformation of earlier landscapes, which were themselves radical alterations of a natural ecosystem. Many environmentally minded people would fight to the death to preserve the Esplanade, for example, or the bikepaths on the Cambridge side of the River. But they might more logically be sympathetic to the sentiment of the poet James Russell Lowell, who lamented the passing of the salt marshes to make way for new, genteel riverfront roads.

Protectors of the Charles River may find that Karl Haglund's *Inventing the Charles River* offers as much to those who would radically remake it as to those who are fighting to preserve it. ■■■

Max Page is an assistant professor of architecture and history at University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He is the author of *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), winner of the 2001 Spiro Kostof Award of the Society of Architectural Historians. He is also co-editor of the forthcoming *Building the Nation: Americans Write about Their Architecture, Their Cities, and Their Environment, 1789 to the Present* (University of Pennsylvania Press).

Haglund's *Inventing the Charles River* is available from the BSA: www.architects.org

Books

Hands on the Land: A History of the Vermont Landscape

by Jan Albers

MIT Press, 2000 (hardbound); 2002 (paper)

Reviewed by
Tom Hotaling AIA

Vermont is a state that lives vividly in the minds of most of us, whether or not we've actually been there. For some, it conjures up images of cows, maple syrup, or skiing; for others, summer camp, idyllic villages, or country inns. But perhaps more than anything, what remains with us is the setting for all these images — its very beautiful landscape and its color — green, then red, then white — a place where seasons have real impact.

While *Hands on the Land* is subtitled "A History of the Vermont Landscape," it is in fact an interdisciplinary study that examines the romance and the reality of the state through its natural, social, and economic histories. Author Jan Albers begins with the pre-glacial period, a time when Vermont had a seacoast and mountains as high as the Himalayans, and progresses through the probable first habitation by man in 9000 BC, to the indigenous Abenaki who met the Frenchman Samuel de Champlain in 1609. She traces the claiming of the land through logging and trapping to the creation of an agrarian economy and village life in the 18th century (what she calls the "switch from an economy of extraction and trade to one of production and development") and then describes the failure of farming in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The fascination of *Hands on the Land* lies in its beautifully orchestrated build-up to the Vermont of today — a state that is 70 percent forested and 30 percent cleared, as compared to the reverse ratio in the 19th century. It is a state whose entire population is now only some 600,000 people (roughly that of the City of Boston) despite its location in the densely populated Northeast.

It is a state where private and public initiatives have supported fine stewardship of the land, where with the passing of Act 250 in 1970, Vermont became a model for other states in the control of land development. It is a state that, despite all this, is a victim of a national phenomenon that Albers calls the "single greatest landscape change of the second half of the twentieth century…the erosion of local identity."

If this book has a shortcoming, it is the lack of footnotes that would have amplified and detailed the text and allowed us to delve deeper into those points that leave us wanting to know more. However, the book's messages are consistently evident: when we touch our land, we leave a legacy to future generations; and in order to make informed decisions about the future of a place, we need to understand its many histories. These messages are lavishly supported on every page with period maps, landscape and portrait paintings, historic photographs, and well-designed graphics, all of which contribute to the pleasure of reading this book.

Tom Hotaling AIA is a principal of Ann Beha Architects in Boston.

Ten Landscapes (series featuring Michael Balston; Topher Delaney; Raymond Jungles; Shunmyo Masuno; Mario Schjetnan; Stephen Stimson)

edited by
James Grayson Trulove

Rockport Publishers

Reviewed by
Laurence A. Clement, Jr., JD, ASLA

With the success of its *Ten Houses* series, Rockport Publishers has recently followed up with six monographs in the *Ten Landscapes* series (ten refers to the number of projects featured in each book). Focusing individually on the work of an innovative designer, each volume is intended as a source book showing "how the work gets done." The books are diverse and engaging visual-verbal compositions. Essential tools these are not, as many site plans are frustratingly small, but the series boldly captures the range of scale in current landscape architecture practice.

These slim but beautiful books portray the delightful reciprocity that can exist between interior and exterior realms. Each explores the temporal and spatial aspects of creating real places, by illustrating themes of infrastructure, structure, materiality, light, connection, process, and meaning.

Michael Balston — a British architect, landscape architect, garden designer, and builder — designs with a concern for tradition, pragmatism, and technological innovation. The work of Stephen Stimson — featured here through estates on Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and other East Coast properties — reflects the influence of Harvard teachers Michael van Valkenburgh and George Hargreaves. This volume is the strongest in the series as a visual synthesis of words and imagery; the graphic design is as compelling as the work itself.

The Florida work of Raymond Jungles, including exotic gardens for wealthy patrons, draws its inspiration from mentor Roberto Burle Marx, the legendary Brazilian landscape architect. Topher Delaney's California residential work might be described as powerful and intensely personal, even risky. Unfortunately, this text is marred by small annoyances such as omission of a citation and misnamed plant material.

But not all the featured designers have a wealthy private clientele. Shunmyo Masuno, a Zen priest and landscape architect who has worked on public projects in both Japan and Canada, creates arresting spatial compositions that incite changing perceptions of connections in time and space.

The volume on Mario Schjetnan might make practitioners and scholars pause and reflect on the direction and substance of their own efforts. His work in Mexico (in association with his firm, Grupo de Diseño Urbano) includes public parks that serve some of Mexico's most underprivileged people through an inclusive design process. Schjetnan's parks are ecologically and culturally based, responsive to the local conditions, but also strong in visual and spatial expression.

As a whole, the series is "wonderfully extravagant," to borrow a phrase from Michael Balston. Despite small site plans and diagrams, each volume is visually engaging and the texts are well written. They are indeed good "source books."

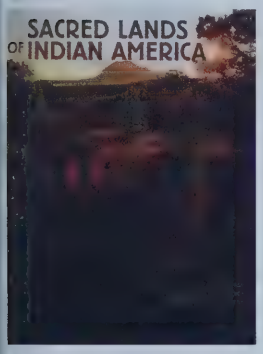
Laurence A. Clement, Jr., JD, ASLA, teaches in the landscape architecture program at Kansas State University.

Sacred Lands of Indian America

edited by Jake Page; photography by David Muench

Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001

Reviewed by Julie Moir Messervy



Spotlighting endangered sites across the United States, *Sacred Lands of Indian America* offers an in-depth account of the threats facing the holy grounds of Indian people. A collaboration between Indian and non-Indian essayists, the book details the struggles of 23 tribes to preserve their sacred lands; its photographs movingly capture the sense of the sacred in each of many different landscapes.

What makes a site sacred? These special gateways to the spiritual world are places where native peoples gather traditional materials, collect medicines, or perform vision quests or spiritual bathing. Different tribes find different aspects of their land holy. For the Lummi tribe, who managed to preserve part of the old-growth forest in the Arlecho Creek basin near Washington State's Mount Baker, sacredness can be "heard" in its sounds that become songs "rising from the lips of the listener into the heavens." For 20 Plains tribes, Devils Tower in northeastern Wyoming is sacred partly because of the stories of its origins. Other holy grounds include such diverse landforms as caves, rivers, lakes, cascades, deserts, mountains, and grasslands.

Threats to these sacred lands are maddeningly diverse. The Lummi had to counter routine clear-cutting, encouraged by government officials and the forest-products industry; the Plains tribes called for a recreational climbing ban on the Tower in June, their sacred month. Energy companies are a frequent threat to these lands, including wind farms and geothermal, coal, and nuclear-power developers. Mining companies target these sites for pumice and open-pit gold mining, or as asbestos dumping grounds. Recreational developers, including ski companies and motorsport enthusiasts, along with road and highway construction, pose yet another threat to these lands.

The book is a call to action: "Think of this volume as a two-by-four — a book that can be used to get the attention of people who make a difference — the members of Congress, the federal and state officials, the business and civic leaders who have all too often demonstrated a woeful ignorance about the loss of sacred land." A postscript entitled, "Toward a Sacred Lands Policy Initiative" explains the inadequacy of federal authorities and programs and suggests some explicit programs and legislation that would help remedy the lack of federal policy regarding sacred lands.

Why should we get involved? Because these sacred lands are under attack and need preservation now. *Sacred Lands of Indian America* makes a compelling case for action. As Christopher H. Peters of the Seventh Generation Fund, a Native American advocacy organization, writes: "In the native belief system, sacred places are not sacred because native people believe they are sacred. They have sacredness in and of themselves. Even if we all die off, they will continue to be sacred."

Julie Moir Messervy is a landscape designer in Wellesley, Massachusetts. The author of three books including the award-winning *The Inward Garden: Creating a Place of Beauty and Meaning,* she is designer of the acclaimed Toronto Music Garden, as well as institutional and private gardens around the Northeast. Her Web site is: www.juliemoirmesservy.com

Connecticut Valley Vernacular: The Vanishing Landscape and Architecture of the New England Tobacco Fields

by James F. O'Gorman; photographs by Cervin Robinson

University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002

Reviewed by Ann McCallum AIA

"Then disaster struck. On August 20 a hard southeast storm brought winds that 'hurt' the tobacco in the fields and 'Broke the trease down.' The next day was worse: 'the Tobacco shead Blew down All to Smash,' wrote George, adding that they dismantled what was left standing and 'piled up the stuf.' On August 31 they began all over again."

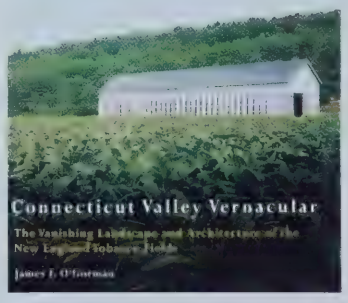
Accounts such as this provide a fascinating and often amusing glimpse into the life of the tobacco farmer, and really are the heart of James O'Gorman's *Connecticut Valley Vernacular.* This not-quite-coffee-table book takes a new look at the tobacco barns that still populate the Connecticut Valley, looking at their architectural forms, as well as the social history surrounding the tobacco-growing industry that dominated Valley agriculture from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s.

Don't buy this book for gorgeous color photographs, because these often fine images are not printed on high-quality paper and lack the richness and depth we have come to expect from new vernacular-architecture books. Buy it instead for the black-and-white images, which are endlessly fascinating. Lewis Hine, famous for his National Child Labor Committee photos of harsh urban working conditions, was also sent to record more rural conditions, and his photos of children working on the tobacco fields are haunting. So, too, are photos from the Howes Brothers collection, an underused archive recording the life and architecture of western Massachusetts from 1882-1907. Several superb prints document farmers, their hired hands, and their children planting, "suckering," hanging to dry, and sorting the tons of tobacco that were the mainstay of this rural economy for more than a hundred years.

I only wish O'Gorman, a respected professor of art and architectural history at Wellesley, had dealt more with the aesthetics of the architecture. There is something very affecting about the abandoned cities of groups of tobacco barns on the flat fields, the spaces between them, and their similarity and simplicity of form. Tobacco barns have a unique architectural feature: they must be ventilated and yet not allow rain to enter, and mid-19th-century farmers developed a system of vertical siding where every third or fourth board was hinged at the top and could be propped open at the bottom. There is something primitive and rational, in the Aldo Rossi sense, in the repetition, both in the individual buildings — think columns and repeated vertical shadows — and as collections of identical primal forms. There is also something distinctly modern in the repetitive slats — think Herzog and de Meuron's Ricolla storage building.

For those who draw inspiration from vernacular architecture, this book is a must. In fact, we have already figured out the perfect chapel for a Valley site in a flat field....

Ann McCallum AIA is a principal of Burr and McCallum in Williamstown, Massachusetts.



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Site Work

Web sites of note

The Boston Groundwater Trust

www.bostongroundwater.org

Forget Venice. Boston has another kind of worry about water levels. Groundwater deterioration threatens wood-pile foundations of buildings in 2,000 acres of metropolitan Boston, including the historic neighborhoods of Back Bay, Fenway, Chinatown, South End, Beacon Hill, and Bay Village. The Trust is the source for information.

Beyond the Big Dig

www.boston.com/beyond_bigdig
www.bigdig.com

Wondering what exactly is supposed to happen once the Big Dig is done? These sites offer commentary and images of the park designs.

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

www.lincolninst.edu

The Lincoln Institute is the center for the discussion of land use, taxation, and policy. Its newsletter, Land Lines, is available online, with details of upcoming workshops and seminars.

PARKitecture in Western National Parks

www.cr.nps.gov/habshaer/parkitect

"Celebrates the concept of designing with nature through the exhibition of black-and-white photographs and measured drawings of representative structures and sites in 10 well-known parks." Can't argue with the concept. And if you can't visit the real sites, this virtual one isn't a bad substitute.

S.A.L.A.D

www.eits.uga.edu/dms/salad

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Noble Foundation Plant Image Gallery

www.noble.org/imagegallery/index.html

You thought a mimosa was a beverage? Silly you. The Noble Foundation is prepared to help you overcome your limitations, with photos and descriptions of trees, shrubs, woody vines, grasses, and forbs. You thought forbs was a magazine? Silly you.

Xeriscape Colorado

www.xeriscape.org

A terrific introduction to the principles of Xeriscape, a "systematic concept for saving water in landscaped areas." No, you don't have to plant cacti in Bangor.

We're always looking for intriguing Web sites, however muddy the connection to architecture. Send your candidates to: epadjen@architects.org

Other Voices by Ricco Villanueva Siasoco

Boston Common

photo courtesy Nancsoft Inc

The Boston Common before daybreak: the fields blue, dewy; the tall lamps positioned like fenceposts, emitting an electric hum. It's early spring, and the homeless men and women sleep beneath canopied trees. On the courts, a tennis ball bounces softly, a kind of metronome, and a woman calls out, "Love-15." Lucy, my four-year old retriever, tugs her leash and leads me toward an empty patch of grass.

This is my favorite hour of the day. Before sunrise, five-thirty in the morning, the park silent and melancholy. Even the clinking of bottles by an old Chinese woman searching for empties has a dolefulness that rings true. A pair of bike messengers pedal casually, cycling with no hands, their canvas bags slung across their backs. One of them holds a cup of coffee as if he were a commuter from the suburbs pulling into South Station. Lucy leads me past the large tiered fountain in pursuit of a squirrel. Despite her domesticity, I forget she's hard-wired for hunting.

Blue mornings on the Common remind me of the only job I've held that required my wakefulness at this hour: the graveyard shift at an Internet company, working from eleven o'clock each evening until seven the next morning. My sole responsibility was a few hours' worth of data entry, and then four hours of dead time. Night watchmen and newspaper printers understand where I'm coming from. The policemen and groundskeepers who tend this park might commiserate, too. By two o'clock each morning, the entirety of my data entry was done. I would sit in that cavernous office and read *The Odyssey*, Joyce's *Ulysses* or another great book for the graduate program I was in — books that required not only fierce concentration, but also a solitude absent from the harsh light of day.

I remember the vast space where I worked had a peacefulness similar to the sloping hill where I now stand, overlooking the Frog Pond, waiting for Lucy to do her business. During the day, in the summertime, the Frog Pond teems with playful toddlers and parents, wading to their ankles in the water, or, in deepest December, skating in circles on the clean ice. In those pre-dawn hours at the Internet company, I felt like an anthropologist, studying the empty desks overflowing with coffee mugs, computers, and unfinished reports. The remnants of industry, of people working and playing without me, pervaded the office at night. Now, overlooking the Frog Pond, there's a similar sense of isolation: weathered green benches, an empty flag pole, a plastic bag caught in a branch, snapping against the wind.

Then a jogger runs past, panting hard, making his way up the hill toward the State House.

What I often forget about the Common — like that office years ago — is that I'm not alone. Despite my lonely recollections, there were others who shared the graveyard shift: Carmen, the loud-mouthed cook who manned the cafeteria; Shane and Sebastian, co-workers who also entered data; and a lanky, affable security guard whose name I never knew. In the same way, the Common balances our need for community with a desire for solitude.

Lucy sniffs the root of a huge oak tree, her tail wagging in the air. For more than 350 years, this odd-shaped piece of land has served many masters. About its early days, the great Boston historian Walter Muir Whitehill described it as a "versatile community resource useful for pasturing cattle, training military companies, and hanging unwelcome Quakers" as well as the perfect spot for "promenades." To the outsider, it would seem impossible to find a quiet place among the crowds on a Saturday afternoon. But walk to the top of the hill and you'll find a peaceful summit overlooking the playing fields and the wide expanse of Charles Street. Somehow this spot, in the very center of it all, feels accessible enough for tourists to feed squirrels yet intimate enough to sit on the towering monument by Martin Milmore and read a book. This is the Common's original purpose and its greatest pleasure: to be everyone's backyard.

Down the hill Lucy leads us, to the gazebo near Boylston Street. In the lofty chasm formed by the Ritz Millennium, sunlight warms the glass and steel monoliths. It looks like the doorway to a lighted room. I unzip my jacket, wanting to feel the warm breeze. Then there's Lucy again, tail wagging, anxious to move on. ■■■

Ricco Villanueva Siasoco has published work in *Boston Magazine, The North American Review,* and *The Boston Globe.* He teaches writing at Boston College.

The Arclinea Collection

Italia, kitchen from
The Arclinea Collection
designed and coordinated
by Antonio Citterio

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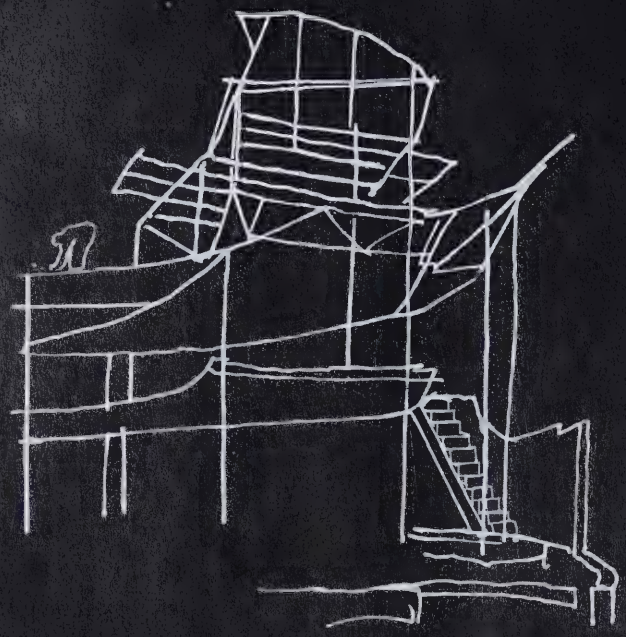

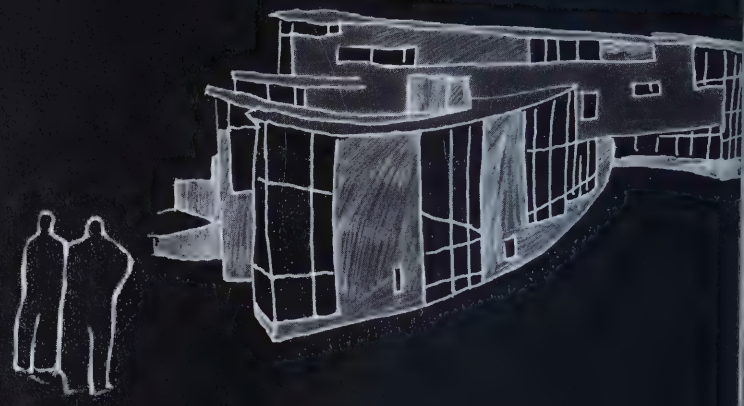

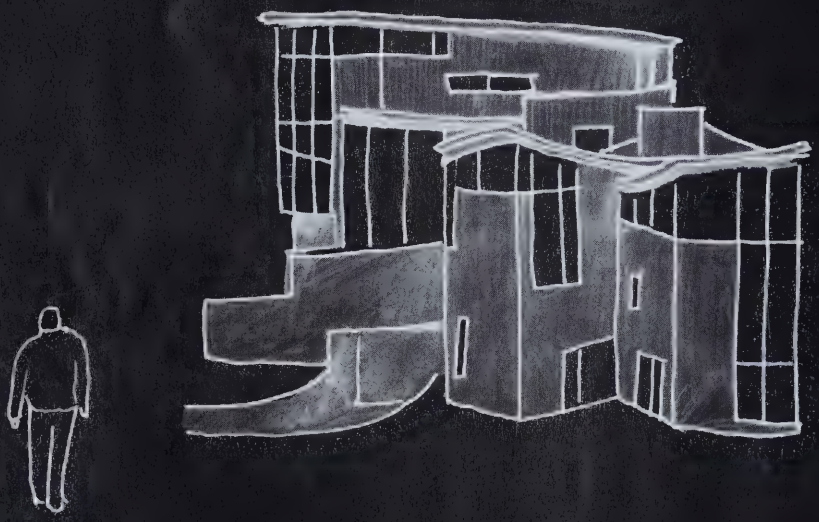

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May/June 2003

Class

Nobody wants to talk about class. Toss "social hierarchy" into Google, and you'll learn all about class structures in India, Indonesia, ancient Babylonia, and medieval England — not to mention the social hierarchies of chimpanzees, puppies, and kittens. Why is it easy to talk about the class structures of others — other cultures, even other species — but so hard to talk about our own?

One answer is that Americans are taught that it's neither necessary nor nice to talk about class, because we are a classless society — an assumption that we all instinctively know to be ridiculous. Because we don't talk about class, we are woefully ignorant of the subtle ways it influences our lives, our judgments, and our personal and professional choices.

And yet class references are all around us — even little kids are quick to discern social distinctions. Adults are equally quick to embrace pop-sociological labels — Yuppies, DINKs, Bobos — that slice our society into ever finer designations, even though a number of recent studies indicate that most Americans identify themselves as "middle class" whatever their actual income level. Politicians thrive on discussing class, using class terminology as code for various ideologies. But even they fail to explore the nuances of class structure in this country.

In recent years, a few books have emerged that suggest that we are witnessing a shift in class structure. *Bobos in Paradise; Snobbery: The American Version;* and *The Rise of the Creative Class* identify an accelerating trend away from the vestiges of aristocracy toward meritocracy, especially a meritocracy that values creativity.

This represents both good and bad news for architects. The good news, of course, is that in a creative meritocracy, architects emerge near the top of the heap, trading status for what they may lack in financial reward. The bad news is that they may soon start to behave as does any group that finds itself at the top of the heap. Protective of their privilege, such groups frequently become self-important and, literally, exclusive — excluding ideas, influences, and people. We frequent apply the terms "Brahmin" and "mandarin" (lifted from class structures of other societies) to the privileged classes; only rarely do the terms carry positive connotations. What then are the implications of an architectural profession all too eager to serve as the new mandarin class?

We already see disturbing signs of elitism in our ranks — of disdain for the public, of distance from real-world constraints, of apathy for social conditions that beg for our attention and for the special skills that architects can offer. Architects have long traded on their tenuous associations with the upper class (not unlike the sniveling Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*), despite the fact we are legally and ethically charged with the protection of the public interest.

Many architects enter the profession because they have caught the idealism virus — they have a sincere desire to do good work that makes a better world. Idealists are especially reluctant to discuss class issues. But, like discussion of other dirty words — money, sex — an open examination of class might be a healthy, productive endeavor.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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Letters

Your January/February 2003 issue continues to impress. Clearly you are producing the best architecture periodical in the nation: interesting, attractive, intelligent, insightful and a pleasure to read.

Roger M. Lang, Senior Vice President
Turner Construction Company
New York City

Thomas Keane's lead article ["Architecture 2002," January/February 2003] reviewing architecture in 2002 contains an unsupported, harsh, and inadvertently ironic assessment of the Community Arcade on Boston's City Hall Plaza as "much reviled." This comment comes up in the context of Mr. Keane's contrast of Boston City Hall as "still lauded" (he fails to note this is a view almost exclusive to architects) with the difficulties entailed in trying to redesign the Plaza.

This judgment is offered with no further elaboration enumerating the many people that Mr. Keane apparently believes share this view or why it is so obviously justified on aesthetic grounds as to require no further discussion. Not that such a bold literary device isn't sometimes appropriate — the Plaza as a whole could, I think, be fairly described as "much reviled," full stop.

The Community Arcade was conceived as the first step in the reconstruction of one edge of the 11-acre Plaza. The arcade was not intended to be a large enough intervention on its own to transform the Cambridge Street edge of the Plaza, much less the Plaza itself. No matter what you think of its appeal, the public regards the arcade at worst as an architectural gesture and, more generally, as a welcome refuge from the expanse of the Plaza without much regard to its architectural merit. (My own judgment is based on hanging out there and watching people.) Revulsion suggests a greater level of engagement than most who pass by experience.

The irony is that a year ago, this "much reviled" arcade was featured on the cover of this magazine as an attractive and positive image to set off the magazine's theme of architecture and spectacle, entertainment, and theater.

Kelley Brown AICP
West Newton, Massachusetts

Your issue on landscape architecture and its relationship with architecture is most welcome [March/April 2003]. As one who has practiced both, I think your call for architects to learn more about landscape can only help to improve the quality of architectural design.

However, your roundtable discussion might have included a wider assortment of landscape architectural practitioners, not just academics and city folk. I was shocked by how all your participants seemed appalled at the thought of using planting to help improve City Hall Plaza. I've admired Boston City Hall since before it was built, but the Plaza always seemed to me a barren, windswept, lifeless place. While I think a multi-faceted approach to improving the space and its vitality, including major efforts by surrounding businesses, the City, and arts institutions will help, it seems perverse to me to rule out planting as contributing to making this place somewhere that people want to be.

Strange as it may sound, too many landscape architects neither like nor know much about plants. I have long noticed an almost pathological defensiveness among landscape architects worried about being confused in people's minds with gardeners and feeling the need to assert their professional superiority. I remember my old professor at Harvard, Norman Newton, proudly telling his students that his favorite work of landscape architecture, the Piazza San Marco, was devoid of plants.

Nearly all the landscape architects your panelists refer to (except Olmsted) represent that segment of the profession that has little use for plants. Perhaps this is in part because, as one of the panelists notes, "It's also an imageability issue." Good planting design is too subtle to show well in sketches, much less on a site plan. Maybe this is why landscape plans usually look so diagrammatic (and unfortunately get built diagrammatically as well, with trees arranged like bollards and no shrubbery since it doesn't register well on a drawing). Even with their flamboyant patterns, the gardens of Roberto Burle-Marx or Wolfgang Oehme don't look like much on paper, whereas a pavement decorated with a geometric array of plastic doughnuts knocks them dead, at least in professional journals and academia.

A generation ago I worked for Larry Halprin (where I, an architect, was the plant materials expert in his New York office). His work was more architectural than most landscape architects and not particularly known for planting, but he more than compensated for this omission by his creative designs using water. If landscape architects want to get rid of their professional inferiority complex, wouldn't it make more sense for them to become really masterful with those elements of their field that they do not normally share with building architects, namely earth, water, and vegetation?

G. Mackenzie Gordon AIA
Gordon & Gordon Architecture &
Landscape Design
Lakeville, Connecticut

Compliments to *ArchitectureBoston* on the skillful work of the March/April issue on "Land." Given the need for greater collaboration between our aligned professions, landscape architects throughout the city should be very encouraged that *ArchitectureBoston* did such a thorough (and thoughtful) job taking on "our" issues.

While the roundtable discussion on historic versus cutting-edge design was interesting (in fact, the topic is hotly debated among many landscape architects) to me the debate is old hat. Any good landscape architect continually strives to balance the need for contemporary artistic relevance with the civic responsibility that comes with building in the public realm. The answer to the debate is actually quite simple: what is appropriate depends upon the project. Both historic and cutting-edge design perspectives are perfectly valid; the trick is knowing why, where, and how to use them. Unfortunately, designers often get it wrong.

Perhaps this choice about "style" is actually simpler for architects than for landscape architects. Many architects actually define themselves as "deconstructivists" or such. If you work for, say, Richard Meier, your client has a very good idea of the "product" before signing the contract. For most landscape architects, it's often not as straightforward. Not all clients should be looking for an Olmstedian design, but not all clients should be doing bagels in the landscape, either. Over the years, a landscape architect in a mainstream firm might very well get to work in every kind of landscape imaginable, from urban plazas to true wilderness, using materials ranging from stainless steel to bark mulch. Fun! To consistently achieve high-quality design and an appropriate site response, a good landscape architect must approach each project as unique, and must be facile in a very wide range of styles.

To illustrate the issue, the fact that Post Office Square isn't contemporary doesn't bother me one bit. It's popular. That was its main purpose, and it is an undeniable success. However, it cannot be our only model for great park design. Boston needs a great, contemporary park design for the Wharf District Parks on the Rose Kennedy Greenway and, admittedly, we are having a very hard time embracing contemporary landscape ideas. With the blight of City Hall Plaza confronting our collective psyche, can you really blame Bostonians for being gun-shy about designers who talk about "challenging landscapes"?

On the other hand, "the Rose" offers a rare opportunity to breathe new urbanity and, yes, new life into our too often provincial city. It's not just another park. We put a mile of highway under the city, and people across America will be checking in just to see what they all paid for! What we build will reflect who we are. It will reveal things about our civility and culture. It should enthusiastically embrace our true identity as a multicultural city and it should embody the genius of Boston's artistic community. Do we have the courage, wherewithal, and creativity to achieve something unique and inspired, and which meets its potential to be the defining icon of 21st century Boston? This ain't your grandfather's park design.

JP Shadley, ASLA, President
Boston Society of Landscape Architects;
Principal, Carol R. Johnson Associates
Boston

While innovative new landscape design is important in our city, there are more appropriate opportunities for it beyond the historic Emerald Necklace ["Lessons from the Little Dig: The Problems of Landscape Preservation," March/April 2003]. Although changed as a result of age, deferred maintenance, roadway intrusions and the like, Olmsted's Emerald Necklace is nonetheless enjoyed by over one million visitors each year. What most people value about these parks is that they continue to do what their designer intended: "To bring peace and refreshment to the city dweller," and to serve as places that bring people together from different neighborhoods, cultures and economic means. They remain "contemporary" in that, over 100 years post-design, they are well-loved and used; they have not been abandoned for our "newer" parks or those with a different landscape design aesthetic.

In our plans for renewal of the Necklace, we must acknowledge that in addition to being a public park system that must respond to the needs of current-day users, the Emerald Necklace is an historic landscape of national significance, reflected in its listing on the National Register of Historic Places and its designation as a Boston landmark. In addition, there are masterplans for the parks' renewal, adopted by the City of Boston and Town of Brookline after broad discussion by their citizenry.

In terms of the Muddy River Restoration Project, our focus as stewards should be on reconnecting pieces of the parks separated by auto traffic and restoring the flow, wildlife habitat, and pastoral beauty of the Muddy River and its surrounding landscape. One of the opportunities presented by the project is to restore the "missing link" in front of the Landmark Center by "daylighting" the river and by providing more than the current swath of green grass, including plantings, seating, lighting and improved pathways.

Simone Auster, President
Emerald Necklace Conservancy
Brookline, Massachusetts

Landscape Architecture magazine committed the original sin by publicizing Martha Schwartz' purple-graveled bullshit as a cover story 23 years ago. Its publication gave it a life of its own; a life it didn't deserve then and doesn't deserve now. I presume — I hope — that Ms. Pressley's mention of it as a Boston work of Ms. Schwartz was tongue-in-cheek ["Burying Olmsted," March/April 2003]. Your photographic reproduction of it demeans the profession of landscape architecture, especially in the eyes of the other design professionals who read *ArchitectureBoston*. Ms. Schwartz has created many outstanding works of landscape architecture. It is unfortunate that you saw fit to highlight her most controversial effort rather than a more socially significant one in an article about a man whose works will never be characterized by adjectives similar to those that apply to the Bagel Garden.

Nelson Hammer, Landscape Architect
Hammer Design
Boston

Editor's note: The photo of the Bagel Garden was included for the benefit of readers who might struggle to imagine how bagels grow. Other images of Martha Schwartz's work were included in an interview with her in the same issue ("Land Marks," page 32).

We want to hear from you. Letters may be sent to: epadjen@architects.org or *ArchitectureBoston*, 52 Broad St., Boston, MA 02109.

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6. The Heritage on the Garden
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7. Rowe's Wharf (Pictured Above)
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Life After 40B

Anti-snob zoning and the dilemma of affordable housing

What is 40B?

Chapter 40B is a statute enacted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1969 in order to promote the development of low- and moderate-income housing across the state. The law requires that at least 10 percent of the housing stock in each municipality be "affordable" as defined by established guidelines. If a community does not meet this standard, a qualified residential developer may request a "comprehensive permit," which overrides most local zoning and building restrictions, as long as 25 percent of the proposed dwelling units are set aside as affordable units. Developers who are denied a permit may appeal to the State Housing Appeals Committee. Only 30 of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns meet the 10 percent standard.

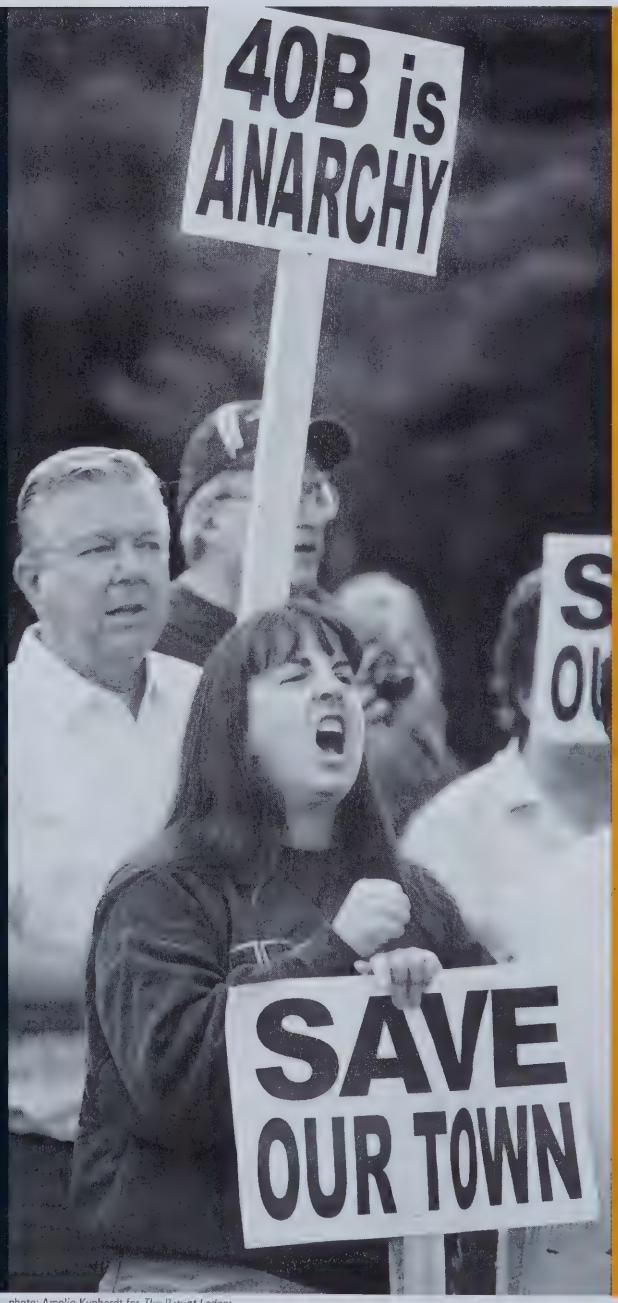

photo: Amelia Kunhardt for *The Patriot Ledger*

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HOWARD COHEN is the president of The Beacon Companies in Boston, a housing developer, and chairs the 40B Study Committee for the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA).

CHARLES EUCHNER is the executive director of the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He is also the author of "Getting Home: Overcoming Barriers to Housing in Greater Boston" (2003), a report of the Rappaport Institute and Pioneer Institute.

BONNIE HEUDORFER is a housing and planning consultant based in Harvard, Massachusetts. She is co-author of *The Greater Boston Housing Report Card 2002* and, most recently, of *Taking the Initiative*, a guidebook on affordable housing strategies for suburban communities. She is the chair of the Harvard Housing Partnership.

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Dubbed "the anti-snob zoning act" at its birth in the 1960s, the Massachusetts statute known as "40B" has been under fire lately. Proponents claim that it encourages the production of desperately needed affordable housing; opponents claim that it allows rapacious developers to flout local planning and zoning controls. Both sides agree that changes are on the way.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Let's start by establishing the context for "anti-snob zoning" when 40B was enacted in 1969. What were some of the social and economic issues at that time? Where did the "anti-snob" label come from?

HOWARD COHEN: I think the anti-snob thing was a part of a battle between the urban and the suburban. There were attacks by suburban legislators on city issues having to do with busing and racial balance. At the legislative level, issues of race, probably more than class, dominated discussions at the time. And 40B was a way for the city to fight back by saying, if you shared our problems, maybe you'd have a little more sympathy. This was at the height of the civil-rights movement, and there was an explosion in the growth of minority populations in the cities. The need to create broader opportunities for minority populations to live in the suburban areas was clearly one of the issues. There was a sense of opening the gates.

BONNIE HEUDORFER: Also, the Vietnam War was in progress and there was concern over how the state would house returning veterans. The cities had traditionally housed returning veterans, but job growth and opportunities were shifting to the suburbs — communities that had not been hospitable to earlier public housing programs. We had new federal and state subsidy programs to stimulate privately owned housing, but we didn't have the zoning for it.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: And yet 1969 was still an era when there wasn't a lot of broad public sympathy for the veterans. Were there other issues as well?

JASON TALERMAN: I think the Mount Laurel decision may have had something to with it as well. That was the famous Supreme Court decision coming out of New Jersey that stated that every municipality has to do its part to accommodate all classes of people — in effect, mandating that New Jersey municipalities take steps to ensure the development of affordable housing. But the returning veterans were also a factor.

CHARLES EUCHNER: In many ways, the whole region, like other regions across the country, was undergoing a churning process. The city of Boston itself was in many ways in a free fall. The city was losing population at a very steady rate. It's not as though you couldn't build housing in Boston, or even that there wasn't enough housing stock to handle people. It was a very different situation from what we have today, when we've in effect readjusted our physical space to fit a population of 600,000 as opposed to a previous population of 800,000 — which creates a greater imperative for housing outside the city. But certain groups of people — not just the middle class, but many working-class residents, too — were leaving the city. That always creates tension in whatever community is affected by it. Some urbanists use ecological terms to describe those kinds of changes: "invasion" and "succession." That really does capture the feel of the process for people who are in the middle of it.

ALFRED WOJCIECHOWSKI: You get another view if you talk to the folks who were living in the outer suburban communities. If you are living in a small town and you know the local farmers, the person who does the cleaning at the school, and people who are just barely making it, you see a pretty broad cross-section and you don't see a homogeneous community. When larger groups of people started to come in, there was indeed the sense that an invasion was occurring. But many people didn't perceive themselves as snobs because they considered their communities to be quite diverse.

CHARLES EUCHNER: The irony is that many of the suburban towns — towns like Woburn, Arlington, Milton, and Quincy — had zoning codes then that were much more accommodating of multi-family housing than they are now. One of the early responses to the churning process I mentioned was that towns started to downzone, using zoning to cap their potential growth. For example, Arlington's build-out in 1975 was about 75,000 — that was how much population the town could accommodate if everything was

There were 119,177,000 housing units in the United States in 2001. Approximately 106,251,000 were occupied as principal residences and 12,455,000 were vacant or seasonal. Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001

developed according to the existing zoning. When they re-zoned that year, their build-out dropped down to about 45,000.

BONNIE HEUDORFER: During the '70s, we were producing about 30,000 housing units a year in this state, almost half of them multi-family, five or more units. That number has dropped dramatically — we're now down to about 17,000 per year, fewer than 3,000 multi-family. That's a tremendous shift. The 1970s was the period of great federal and state programs to expand the supply of affordable housing, but it was also a time when the private market was working fairly efficiently to get affordable, unsubsidized units built.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: What percentage of income went to housing at that time compared to today? I'm curious about some of the motivations behind 40B back then. How much was due to social engineering — redistributing populations or solving larger social issues — and how much was a response to the concerns about affordability that drive the discussion today?

CHARLES EUCHNER: Housing was a lot more affordable back then. I can only take you back to 1980, when the ratio of average home value to average income was about 2:1. Ten years later in 1990, it was over 4:1. In greater Boston today, it is over 5:1. I think 40B was intended as a tool for shuffling and directing housing, but it's evolved into something different.

MARK BEALE: And of course the mortgage guidelines used to cap allowable housing costs at 25 percent of your income.

ALFRED WOJCIECHOWSKI: Now they allow up to 50 percent of your income.

HOWARD COHEN: In the beginning, 40B was the tool for determining where subsidized housing would go. And at that time, we had a number of visionaries in the state, among them Bill White, the director of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, who said he wasn't going to put all of the subsidy money into the cities; he was going to spread it around the state. He wanted to have diverse opportunities for people.

BONNIE HEUDORFER: Remember, too, that substandard conditions and overcrowding were still problems across the country at that time. Those problems have disappeared in most areas, and now it's become entirely an issue of affordability.

ALFRED WOJCIECHOWSKI: The high cost of housing has fundamentally changed the problem, but it's also changed who the players are. National developers have entered this market in just the last few years. They build luxury housing under 40B, because the return on the luxury units more than covers the costs of making 25 percent of the units "affordable."

CHARLES EUCHNER: Another difference in the players today is the network of community development corporations and other grassroots housing advocates. Many of them were just starting out 30 years ago, but they are very professional now.

JASON TALERMAN: I don't want to diminish the importance of all these comments, but I really think that the whole issue is about money. Land ran out. You couldn't do conventional development on what was left. Partly because some of the land was lousy, partly because of what really was snobby zoning. I think towns are guilty of snobby zoning in a lot of circumstances. Prices went up because the stock went down. Developers have to make money somehow. They got hold of 40B, because this is how you can still make money when there is no land that's left to develop in a conventional manner. And these guys are making money.

HOWARD COHEN: That's exactly right. What happened was that our real-estate industry, including residential development, was terminated in the downturn of the early '90s. People were walking around saying there would never be another new building here in their lifetime. In the meantime, national developers, who had a much broader perspective, had developed a new luxury rental-housing product that was targeted to young professionals and empty-nesters. The national developers saw Boston as a market not served by this product. Because of the down-zoning that had occurred, they also saw the only way to find land was to use 40B. I think that some of them used 40B in a way local developers would not have. They used it much more as a club because they were outsiders and didn't have the reciprocal relationships. They didn't think they'd have to come back to town.

Average per unit construction cost, 2001

Source
U.S. Census Bureau, 2001 Building Permits
(available online at http://censtats.census.gov/)

But then local developers started saying, "Wait a second, if these guys can do it, we can, too."

ELIZABETH PADJEN: That sounds like 40B was turned on its head, from a tool for anti-snob zoning and providing affordable housing to a tool for providing luxury housing. What is the legal definition of affordable housing?

JASON TALERMAN: Housing for households making 80 percent of the median income for a particular region, which is usually defined by county.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: And what does that typically translate into in terms of income?

JASON TALERMAN: Well, for a town like Mendon, 80 percent of the median household income is now listed as $64,000 which, oddly, is the same as Dover and Medfield. For towns on Cape Cod, it's listed as $47,000. Andover is listed as $59,000. And in Easton, it's $56,000.

CHARLES EUCHNER: I think 40B is still on its head in a lot of cases. I'd like to underscore one point, and that is the idea of land shortage. You hear all the time that we don't have any land left in Boston or in greater Boston. That's exactly wrong. The problem isn't that we don't have land; the problem is that we don't dispose of it very efficiently, and we don't zone it so that it is possible to use for housing.

JASON TALERMAN: I agree that there is a lot of land out there that is potentially available for housing. But there is a lot of land that people think is buildable that really isn't. The fact that it is open land doesn't mean that it should be built on, or that it should be built on in a certain way. And that's something that towns are angry about — 40B undercuts massive planning initiatives by the towns. Let's say a town does everything right by smart-growth standards — they do small-lot zoning in the center of town, and some mid-lot zoning in other parts of town, and some big-lot planning in a rural alcove, and then even set aside some other land for recreational use. Why should money-driven private interests supersede that? It's a home-rule state. The town says, "We decided what is good for ourselves, we followed the rules, we did our part, and now we are getting kicked in the teeth over it?"

CHARLES EUCHNER: In my mind, 40B has at least a good intent, but it's blind to the circumstances of communities. There's nothing in 40B that tells developers that this parcel of land is more appropriate for housing than that one.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Let's ask Mark and Elaine to talk a bit about the point of view of the communities — how the residents feel about some of these issues, and how you are contending with changes. Nantucket is probably the great petri dish of housing, economic, and social forces contained in one environment.

MARK BEALE: Nantucket has a quirky zoning code. We have 5,000-square-foot lots up to 10-acre lots. The quirky part is that in order to get zoning passed, we had to add an addendum in 1972 that allows every lot to have two dwellings on it. And that adds a lot of density. Right now there are 8,000 houses. We did a build-out analysis, and there could be 24,000 dwellings on Nantucket, which includes many second dwellings. We've had several proposals for 40B developments, but none have been built so far. There is a current proposal that will probably go ahead — a 40B project in a three-acre zone, where the guy has bought a small lot and is going to put in eight units, two affordable and six that will sell for over $2 million each. The neighbors are not thrilled — it's in a rural setting.

The biggest complaint on Nantucket is from the local community, the year-round community. They ask, "Where will our children live?" Their kids can't move to a neighboring town of lesser housing quality. We're an island — there isn't one. We have people now who commute every day on either the "fast boat" or by air. We have plumbers, electricians, carpenters who commute every day. It offends many of our native population that their children can't live on Nantucket. We in the planning world have a strong sympathy for that, but we have not been able to do anything about it. We can't legislate who gets to buy a house for what price. How do you keep the houses from going into the hands of off-island summer residents, who later rent out those houses for a season and make much more than they would for a year-round rental?

JASON TALERMAN: The issues are the same on both of the islands. The Vineyard is really close to the breaking point. And yet there's a 355-unit 40B plan that's going ahead that not a single person on the island is in favor of despite the fact that it will provide at least 100 units of affordable housing.

MARK BEALE: It is my reading that people are offended by the idea that the developers can totally avoid zoning.

In 2001, approximately 72,265,000 or 68 percent of all units nationwide were occupied by owners. Approximately 33,996,000 or 32 percent of all units were occupied by renters.

Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001

CHARLES EUCHNER: What if 40B were modified so that the state tells towns that everybody has a burden, but they can decide where the burden will be borne?

MARK BEALE: That's a good start.

ELAINE LAZARUS: Part of the problem with 40B is that it assumes all zoning is snob zoning, and that is not the case. Not all towns have two-acre lots. You have to look at the individual community. There is a lot of good planning and zoning going on out there, and every town wants to control its destiny and believes it's unique. Towns want to keep their character, and they want development that is consistent with that character. People are most concerned about simple things like setback and heights. The density, if you design it well, can often work. I find that most people are concerned about appearance — making the development fit in. It's unfortunate that design is often a casualty of 40B developments. It is the part that's cut out to save money.

HOWARD COHEN: I think there are two issues. One is that we've had this social experiment over a 30-year period when somewhere around 30,000 units have been built. From the first day, 40B was controversial. The world hasn't come to an end. Where are those horrible examples of 40B projects diminishing value? We don't see much data on that. I think we have to ask that question because it ties to the next question. A couple of years after 40B was passed, the state's Housing Appeals Committee turned down a 40B proposal because the community had a local plan. The Housing Appeals Committee said that if there's a local plan and the town is really building affordable housing, it would not override local zoning. So the ability of a town to take control of the 10-percent requirement was there. Maybe 10 percent is an arbitrary number, but lots of numbers in society are arbitrary. If you have a local plan and you're making progress, you can have control. I know of only one town — Lincoln — that affirmatively pursued that tactic.

JASON TALERMAN: Barnstable was another. Lincoln, by the way, has fallen under the 10 percent target and is now fighting 40B like mad.

CHARLES EUCHNER: Howard's point is connected to another oddity of Massachusetts town government and planning. When towns do plans, the plans don't get linked to the zoning codes. And so you have this strange world where the zoning says one thing and the planning says another, and nobody really knows what to follow as a default. Plans start to look meaningless.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Can you give an example of that kind of conflict?

MARK BEALE: I can. Nantucket just spent four years drawing up a comprehensive plan for the island. A wonderful plan — we passed it at the town meeting two years ago. We approved the concept of having village centers — some that already exist, like 'Sconset and Madaket, as well as a few new ones. We encouraged developers to pay attention to those village areas and to stay away from those areas that were called country areas. Well, it made no sense relative to our zoning code. Our zoning code says, here's a three-acre lot and here's a 5,000-square-foot lot. They didn't match up.

CHARLES EUCHNER: You see that kind of misfit between planning and zoning in pretty much every city and town. One of the tensions that's always under the surface in 40B is that there is no fit between the big ideas that people can embrace to serve their communities' needs and the rules of the road that the developers follow.

JASON TALERMAN: None of the towns that I represent that are involved in legislative initiatives on 40B think that we should kill 40B — but they think it should be changed so it returns to the days when it was more of an incentive and less of a club. There are a lot of predatory developers out there who are using it the wrong way. I agree with Howard — towns did have an opportunity to take some control and they didn't do it. Now it's too late to hit that 10-percent target in many of those towns, unless there is some sort of fundamental change in the way we count units. Howard's right — 10 percent is an arbitrary number. But if it's an arbitrary number, then we should change it because it really doesn't work as a number. And as Elaine was saying, the towns that are getting hit the hardest with 40B right now are not the snob towns. I'm working on five 40B proposals right now in Chelmsford. Chelmsford is not a snobby town. By and large, it's the middle-income towns that are being hit, because a developer can still get the land for a price that makes it work.

Home prices by metropolitan area 1991 vs. 2001

Source
"The State of the Nation's Housing, 2002," Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Elaine, what is the situation in Hopkinton in terms of housing and new development?

ELAINE LAZARUS: The town grew very fast in the last 10 years. The population went up 40 percent. The percentage of affordable housing went down. Actually, the total number of affordable units went up, but the percentage declined because there was such fast growth. We had some 40Bs, maybe one every couple of years. We haven't seen any multi-family 40Bs that exceed the density that we currently allow. But developers are applying under 40B to get by local wetlands regulations and to get access to municipal water and sewer that they normally couldn't get because the town is at capacity. So we are seeing fights over those issues.

HOWARD COHEN: Let me put this in a little bit of context. AvalonBay is one of the nation's great multi-family developers. It is a company that I do business with, so I'll disclose that. In every market it's in, its product gets the top rent from people with discretionary income, so presumably it's building a good product. In the last four or five years, AvalonBay has probably built 4,000 40B multi-family units here, not one of which would have been built without 40B. Of those units, 1,000 are affordable units. So AvalonBay, pursuing its self-interest as a publically held company, is probably the largest developer of affordable housing in the state. That is why some of us who are pro-40B really want to fight, because we care about this. Without 40B, none of those affordable units would have been built.

JASON TALERMAN: But you are looking at housing in a vacuum. Housing doesn't exist only to give people a place to eat and watch cable TV. They have to put their kids through school; there has to be sewer and water for all of those people. Towns have zero money this year. Town schools are bursting. Town sewer systems are outdated. Town roads are terrible. Where is the money going to come from to provide this?

HOWARD COHEN: I can tell you one answer. If we don't grow our economy — and that means growing our population — it's going to get worse. You are not going to do it by chasing 20-year-old college students out of the state because they can't afford to live here.

CHARLES EUCHNER: That gets to a bigger issue, which is that we need a whole lot more production than you are talking about. And 40B is not going to get you a whole lot more production in and of itself. The problem is that our system discourages housing at every single stage in the process. If we are ever going to really deal with the affordable-housing crisis, which means housing for more than the people who qualify because of some income cut-off, we need to produce a lot more units, many more than 40B proponents can ever dream of producing. I actually have a lot of sympathy for both sides of this argument. I don't see a whole lot of interest in the communities in setting aside land for multi-family housing.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Why do you think that is? Is it a fear of a physical change because multi-family housing makes a community look different? Is it schooling and the attendant property-tax issue?

CHARLES EUCHNER: I think it's both. One is that it costs a lot of money to pay teachers and firefighters and police and so forth. It's expensive to provide basic services, more expensive than most new housing provides for in terms of new property taxes. But the other thing is that people buy into a town. They are buying the community, not just the unit. And anything that upsets the product that they bought is going to raise concerns.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: There was an article in a local newspaper recently about the town of Boxford, which is considered a relatively wealthy town. The town is cracking down on the use of so-called in-law apartments. The chairman of the Boxford ZBA [Zoning Board of Appeals] was quoted as saying that the fact that Boxford is a single-family-dwelling town is what makes it the beautiful town that it is today. This was apparently the source of his concern about the apartments. There are many ways to think about housing production. One is turning on the spigot full blast in terms of some of these large developments. But imagine the town of Boxford, where there are a hundred or so in-law apartments of which apparently 70 or so are illegal because they are not rented to relatives of the homeowners. Boxford could easily be hit with two or three 40B projects — 20 or 30 units each — that would have this town up in arms, when in fact they have an equivalent number of housing units in the form of apartments over people's garages. These kinds of units, whether you call them in-law apartments or accessory apartments, seem to make sense socially on a variety of levels for not only the elderly parent, but also for young adults, the schoolteachers and firefighters, even the elderly longtime residents on fixed incomes who can use the income to pay property taxes and stay in town. With proper design and zoning controls that would protect

In 2001, the median value of owner-occupied homes was $123,187. The median owner-occupied home was 30 years old in 2001. *Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001*

the town's physical character, I would think that these kinds of units would alleviate a lot of housing concerns.

MARK BEALE: Let me expand on that. In Nantucket, we have a zoning code that allows two dwellings per lot. It started out as being for Grandma and Grandpa and for the kids when they come home and need a place to live. For years this was a wonderful vehicle for keeping our own families on the island. For keeping elderly parents on the island. And now it's an investment vehicle.

JASON TALERMAN: You rent out your guest house or you move into your guest house and rent your principal residence.

MARK BEALE: Worse than that. You build two and rent two — and live in Boston. You're on island for maybe a week a year.

BONNIE HEUDORFER: Some communities are taking a different approach. Barnstable has an amnesty program for bringing illegal accessory apartments up to code and renting them on a year-round basis to people who are income eligible. And those units can count toward the 10-percent requirement. I think for every town like Boxford that says, "No, we don't want that," there are others that are saying, "Wait a minute — the appearance of the town is important, and diversifying the housing stock is important. These goals aren't mutually exclusive." Accessory apartments can provide an invisible means of diversifying the stock, but it's a lot tougher to qualify them as affordable housing on the state's subsidized housing inventory. In many towns, though, diversifying the stock is itself an important goal, towns where the predominant housing form is a four-bedroom, 2,800-square-foot house on 3.5 acres. One of the most striking statistics to have come out of the last census for my town is that 56 percent of the houses had four or more bedrooms, and half of the households are one or two people.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: I assume the general trend is toward one- and two-person households?

BONNIE HEUDORFER: Yes, and increasingly so in many suburbs. There is an aging population in many communities. The kids have grown, some of whom want to stay in town but have no alternatives. A lot of communities are interested in increasing the affordability and diversifying the housing stock for their own employees or for existing residents.

MARK BEALE: How do you legislate that?

BONNIE HEUDORFER: Well, you can't exclude people, although a number of communities allow accessory apartments for family members only.

CHARLES EUCHNER: To me that is kind of insane. I thought we got rid of primogeniture and entail hundreds of years ago. It is totally ridiculous — if a unit is good enough for your own family, and if it meets certain minimal standards of health and safety and access, then why in the world would you put any limit whatsoever on renting it to anyone you see fit?

ELAINE LAZARUS: I have heard people say, "We don't want renters because we don't know who these people are — they are transients." I hear that a lot. Hopkinton has a similar bylaw for family members or people over 60 whether they are related or not, and we went to town meeting last year to try to allow accessory apartments for affordable housing. I was amazed at what I heard, and it was shot down.

BONNIE HEUDORFER: In terms of what is getting built under 40B, there are really two discussions. One is the discussion of ownership housing — new three-bedroom units that make housing affordable to families. The other discussion is of rental housing. Massachusetts has done poorly in terms of building new multi-family rental housing over the last decade, although the pace has started to pick up in the last five years. Roughly 10,000 new rental units received building permits in the last five years in greater Boston; about 12 percent of those were considered affordable. Nearly a third of those new units and 70 percent of the affordable ones came through 40B.

JASON TALERMAN: I am currently sifting through about 50 40B applications. By and large, they are from small, local developers who want to do four-bedroom single-family houses. One of the first questions many ZBAs [Zoning Board of Appeals] ask is if the developers would consider doing an apartment building. Many of these towns don't need any more four-bedroom houses. But a lot of developers say, "No, I build single-family houses. It's what I want to do. I can probably get $50,000 to $100,000 more a piece."

Rental affordability by metropolitan area:

Fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment, 2000

Percent of income needed to pay fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment, 2000

	Teacher	Janitor
BOSTON	29%	54%
PROVIDENCE	19%	42%
BUFFALO	17%	37%
SAN FRANCISCO	43%	79%

Source
"The State of the Nation's Housing: 2002," Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Currently, there are approximately 70 bills that have been filed in the legislature to fix 40B. What are some of the specific things that are wrong with 40B that have people upset enough to create this momentum for changing the status quo?

CHARLES EUCHNER: One that we've already discussed is whether 10 percent is the right target. Another one is how to show progress toward that target. Another one has to do with what income levels are included.

BONNIE HEUDORFER: Another has to do with the percentage of the units in a 40B project that should be designated as affordable. The early developments were closer to 100-percent affordable, and now it's typically 25 percent. The bills that have been filed generally fall into several categories. One category looks at what counts toward the target. For example, do you count mobile homes?

CHARLES EUCHNER: Or jail cells?

BONNIE HEUDORFER: The second category tries to ease the impact of 40B by limiting the size and pace of the developments. Another gives communities more control over how to get to the 10 percent.

JASON TALERMAN: Another category asks what land-use controls the town still gets to employ to make sure these developments are directed at the right chunk of land. It's maintaining a certain level of home-rule and protection of the environment.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Are we addressing the right questions? It seems that 40B today addresses two extremes of the housing issue. We have affordable housing and we have luxury units at $2,500 a month. Should diversity of housing product, to use Howard's word, be a goal?

HOWARD COHEN: We have a bigger problem, which is simply producing housing. It's not clear to me what the underlying reason is. You would think that if the effects of growth were the problem, then towns that have grown the most would have the worst financial situation. But a study by the University of Massachusetts has shown that growth and financial distress don't correlate. Yet there is this anti-growth sentiment that seems to pervade the discussion. It gets articulated around schools. The towns know they are saying something that is not terribly logical when they say they don't want to educate any more kids. But where are the kids supposed to go?

JASON TALERMAN: I disagree 100 percent with that. It's not a matter of not wanting to educate children. In fact, I think you could say the hallmark of all the towns that are run well is how good their school systems are. And they love building schools. What they can't do is build them year after year and have them burst at the seams.

BONNIE HEUDORFER: It is worth underscoring again that 40B went from being the vehicle that enabled other housing subsidy programs to work to being the only way of getting any development through. Not all towns are exclusionary, not all zoning is bad. Clearly there are sites that should not be built on at all. But what is different between now and the '80s is that in the '80s there was a surge of development to meet demand. Supply now is way down because development has been constricted across the board.

CHARLES EUCHNER: One of the ideas that's in vogue these days is that of the "tipping point." It's not that we don't want new housing, but when housing development comes in such big chunks, it throws everything out of equilibrium. We have to build new schools and they have to fit the state specs — which are unbelievably ridiculous — we have to invest in vast new infrastructure, and so on. It is an all-or-nothing thing for many communities. Faced with an all-or-nothing proposition, I think it is understandable — and regrettable — that people push back. Ultimately the answer has to be that we create a system that lets development happen easily in appropriate spaces rather than this battering ram, all-or-nothing approach. I think nothing less than an overhaul of state regulations on housing is going to enable that to happen. One positive step forward would be to give any community that wants to get out from under 40B a challenge to identify where multi-family housing can be built.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Is the conversation now being skewed by the fact that the large developers took such an interest in 40B? Is there a way to target the smaller producers again?

CHARLES EUCHNER: It's hard, because the affordable units are being financed by the "unaffordable" market-rate units. The large-scale developers are financing the program, unlike 30 years ago, when it was federal and state dollars. This underscores a fundamental problem with 40B, but a problem that is not 40B's fault. There is a massive misfit of the different actors and the different rules guiding the actors. Towns are overwhelmed. Many of them are

In 2001, nearly 12 million households (34.6 percent) carried a heavy rent burden, defined as spending more than 35 percent of household income on housing. Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001

run by dedicated amateurs who are putting in long hours on their own time without compensation. None of this development fits into the context of any kind of plan; none of this fits into the context of zoning, and of course, it is meant to override zoning. None of this, at any stage of the process, asks or answers the simple question: if we wanted to build *x* number units of housing, where would be the most appropriate place to put that? None of this tries to connect the various dots. And that is the fundamental flaw underlying all of this. Alfred came up with a proposal three or so years ago as a thought piece — how can we build housing near transit stations? He came up with a vision which I found very compelling for the Forest Hills section of Boston, which really has lots of capacity for housing and is exactly the right place to do it.

ALFRED WOJCIECHOWSKI: The site was a very simple piece of industrial land at a confluence of roadways and park systems, located at the edge of a neighboring community. We did a model based on three- to seven-story buildings, with 1,000 square feet per unit. We came up with 3,000 to 7,000 units of housing, including ground-floor retail and parking above ground. We've talked about AvalonBay doing 4,000 units over the last five years; it could come in and do 4,000 units in Forest Hills.

CHARLES EUCHNER: One of the reasons 40B is so frustrating is that it displaces the main issue, which is: where should we build housing? Instead, the question with 40B becomes, where can some people build housing? The point is that if you want to do something about the housing crisis, there are lots of appropriate places to do it — places where you are not building on wetlands, you are not threatening the environment, you are not threatening the character or the integrity of the community, you are not going to overwhelm people with traffic. If we don't build housing, we are going to lose population, we are going to lose businesses, and we are not going to be the economic dynamo that we've been in the last 10 years. There are lots of ways to solve the problem, but somebody has to decide to do it. ■■■

Between 1973 and 2001 median family income rose at an annual rate of 5.3 percent, while gross rents grew at a rate of 5.7 percent.

Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001

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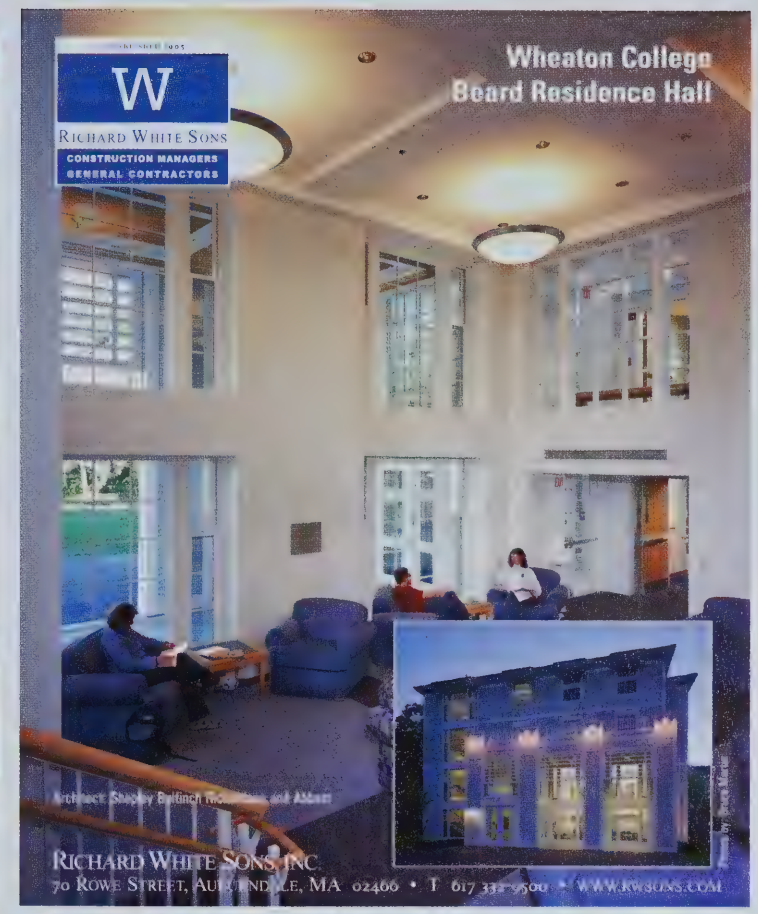

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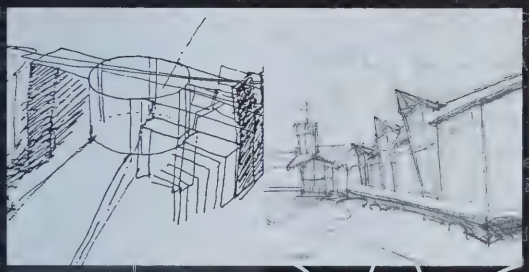

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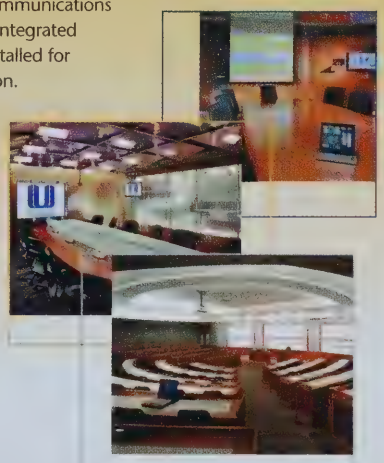

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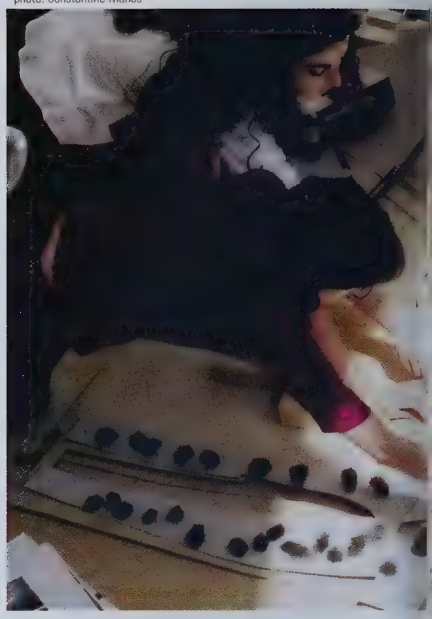
Class Dismissed

The unexamined bias

by Ted Landsmark, Assoc AIA, MEvD, JD, PhD

photo: Constantine Manos



Do architects discriminate on the basis of class? Recent books by Kathryn Anthony and Melvin Mitchell FAIA question perceived gender, racial and implied class bias in the design profession. In 1970, Urban League president Whitney Young chastised the American Institute of Architects because only 1 percent of America's registered architects were African-American. Anthony, Mitchell, and Young have argued that more diversity would encourage a broader range of clients and provide empathetic professionals as role models for those currently underrepresented.

Today, African Americans are still only 1 percent of registered architects, Hispanics represent 2 percent and Asians 3 percent. Women, who represent about half of our architecture school graduates, still constitute only 11 percent of registered architects; there are fewer than 250 African-American women architects. While there is little legal evidence of overt racism or sexism by design educators and practitioners, the design professions (unlike law and medicine) have shown little demographic change over the past quarter century. Could *class* distinctions play a role in shaping perceptions of who can become an architect?

"Class" is an informal, society-wide grouping of people according to political or economic similarities, social status, or shared ways of life. America's class-consciousness has evolved from the Founding Fathers' incorporation of slave ownership into the Constitution, to Marxist descriptions of divisions of labor between underpaid workers and wealthy owners, to 20th-century economic policies that created the perception of a significantly larger "middle class."

Throughout, we have espoused that America is an economically democratic society in which anyone can rise to the top purely by dint of hard work.

Scholars are divided on how permeable our class hierarchy really is. Cornell sociologists David Grusky and Kim Weeden argue that efforts to characterize Americans by income alone indicate little about individual consumer or cultural patterns. Group similarities tend to be determined more by professions, shared work experiences, or educational training. Paul Kingston, a sociologist at the University of Virginia, similarly argues that similar economic positions "do not significantly share distinct, life-defining experiences," that economic inequalities alone do not denote the existence of classes, and that there is more generational mobility today than 50 years ago. Conversely, Purdue's Robert Perrucci writes that since 1970, a lack of access to key social, credential, income, and investment capital has stagnated American social mobility. Perrucci believes that 80 percent of Americans, most of whom define themselves as "middle-class," actually constitute a new working class lacking real job security and high wages.

Race often conflates with measures of access to social class and professional achievement. Although the black middle class nearly doubled over the past two decades, about 30 percent of blacks, as compared to 8 percent of whites, remain "poor" by government standards. Erik Olin Wright, a sociologist at the University of Wisconsin, argues that discrimination stymies black economic mobility, as does the perception that people of color have different values and behaviors from whites. The permeability of America's class structure is debatable. But the fact that there *is* a class structure (that most Americans believe they are in the middle of) is beyond dispute.

Architecture provides sound design ergonomics, pleasing aesthetics, solid engineering, and skillful management without regard to the affluence of our clients. Yet architects have had little success overcoming the perception that we focus primarily on satisfying an upper-class taste for signature buildings. From Frank Lloyd Wright to Frank Gehry, architects are presented as serving upwardly mobile, status-conscious clients, rather than addressing the spatial needs of the poor or middle classes. Design-firm principals are represented more as the Gary Cooper stereotype in *The Fountainhead* (1949) than as Wesley Snipes'

Could class distinctions play a role in shaping perceptions of who can become an architect?

"2020 Vision," a diversity conference for design professionals, will be held in Boston on November 19-20, 2003. For more information, go to: www.architects.org/diversity

For more information about diversity in the architecture profession, go to: www.aia.org/diversity

architect in *Jungle Fever* (1991) or Matthew Perry's character in *Three to Tango* (1999). Our leading publications largely celebrate architects as erudite males with good breeding, well-mannered appearances, *noblesse oblige*, and quietly assertive demeanors honed in Ivy League universities. Such stereotypes glide confidently among corporate and second-home clients, fluent in aesthetic linguistics that exude northern European design sophistication — successful practitioners apparently have the social acumen and *class* necessary to work comfortably with affluent and influential clients. No one expressed surprise at the homogeneity of the architects selected to submit proposals for rebuilding the World Trade Center — Sam Mockbee and David Adjaye would have been aberrations in this pantheon.

How can we overcome this perceived upper-class homogeneity? First, there is no evidence that women, minorities, and people from working-class backgrounds do not want to be architects. Yet most of our design schools are startlingly complacent in their efforts to diversify their faculties and student bodies. Architects entering the profession often knew an architect when they were young. Yet few middle-class or poor Americans have any concrete idea of what a practicing architect contributes to civic betterment. Better outreach and cultural training by our schools would result in a more diverse range of work performed by a more diverse range of designers.

Second, better management of our internships — to nurture minorities, women, and others underrepresented by class — could also draw more diverse practitioners. Internships provide advanced design and construction management training, but also winnow out minority and women architects who are unable or unwilling to accommodate their personal styles to those of firm principals. Some aspiring architects believe they are being steered toward the professional fringes of design during their internships. Carefully mentored internships could support the achievement of professional goals and assist in developing networking skills, such as those provided in the Boston Society of Architects' young professionals programs.

Third, architects are grossly underpaid based on their levels of knowledge and the responsibilities they carry, despite being thought of as well-compensated, upper-class voices for design excellence and aesthetic discernment. Architects are themselves likely to identify culturally with the upper class. In our awards and publications, we perpetuate myths that architects belong to an elite social class that exhibits the presumed discernment and values necessary to survive in competitive private-practice environments. We could usefully examine our schools, firms, and forums and ask who we really are and whom we really serve. We might conclude that a more diverse profession focused on the needs of the majority of Americans would result in real diversity — of aesthetics, skills, and markets.

We may be uncomfortable confronting allegations of racial or gender discrimination, but perhaps classism does play a role in reducing our professional diversity. As our market share shrinks in a global economy, now may be the time to address how our maintenance of social distinctions bars us from talent and markets that are more diverse than we are — and very much in need of our services.

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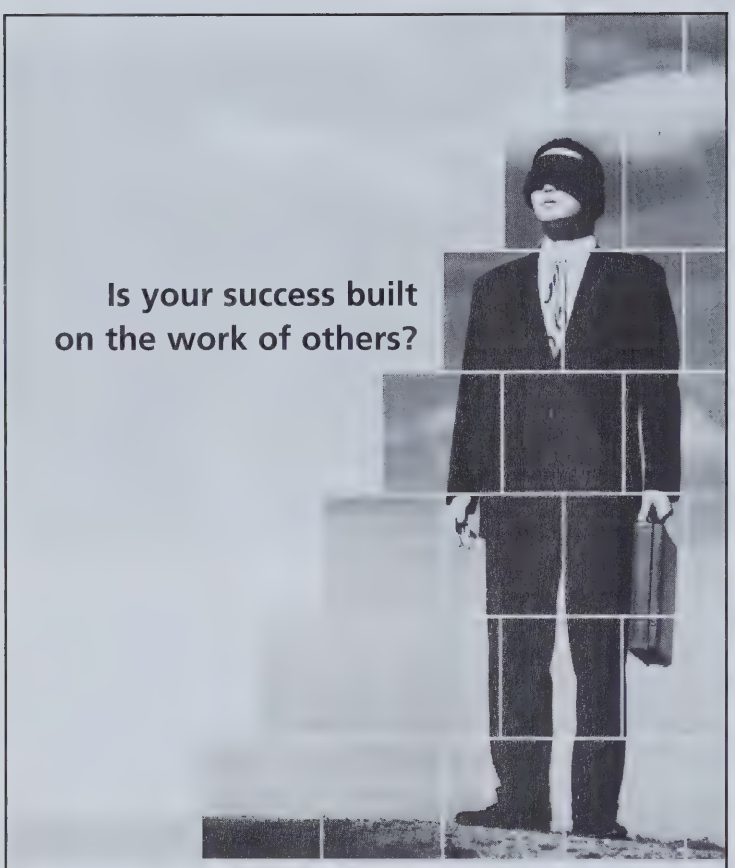
Ted Landsmark, Assoc. AIA, MEvD, JD, PhD, is a graduate of Yale University and is president of the Boston Architectural Center, New England's largest accredited architecture and interior design college. He is chair of the AIA Diversity Committee.



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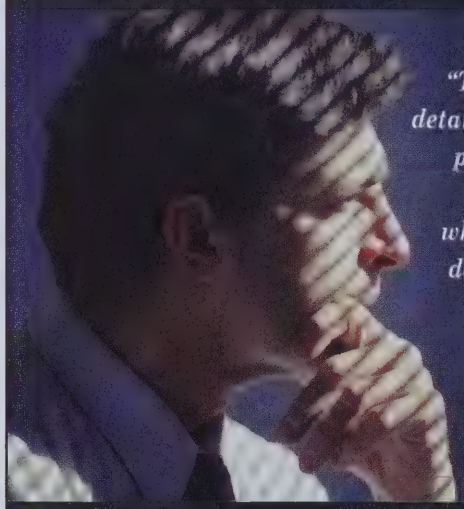

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Takin' It to the Streets

The Geography of

by Max Page

Back in the '70s, the Doobie Brothers offered up a ballad of despair, announcing that soon the poor would be "takin' it to the streets." Lucky for the Doobies: they didn't have to write lyrics about takin' it to private roads, gated communities, and that ubiquitous, radio-free downtown — the shopping mall.

Almost a decade before the Doobies were celebrating the liberating power of the streets, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall issued a warning about the dangers to public life posed by the growing number of private shopping malls in America, where free speech was exercised at the whim of the owners. "The shopping center," he wrote in a 1968 opinion, "is clearly the functional equivalent of the business district" where protests had traditionally taken place. In a series of cases before the Court, in which various groups claimed the right to leaflet, march, and protest in shopping malls, he argued passionately, although largely unsuccessfully, that free speech must be guaranteed even if it means stepping on the toes of private owners. Most of his colleagues disagreed and today, in the vast majority of the "business districts" of the United States — that is, shopping malls — there is no right to free speech.

Marshall argued so passionately in the so-called "mall cases" of the late 1960s and 1970s because he understood that the very character of speech in public places has a power all its own and must be protected and even cultivated. The face-to-face meeting of citizens promotes solidarity among participants and respect (however begrudging) from the audience, who can witness the dedication of the participants to their ideas. Radical ideas often require radical methods of gaining attention. The public forum is the only setting where a group can gain attention to minority ideas by disrupting the normal routine of city life. The success of the civil-rights movement was due in part to masterful use of public forums, through marches, sit-ins, and other acts of civil disobedience. "All in all," legal scholar Thomas Emerson observed, "the public assembly has a dynamic quality achieved by no other form of communication." (Emerson called television, radio, and journalism "middle-class" forms of communication.) In an era of sound-bites, handlers, and spin-doctors, public protest can provoke invigorating debate. Without public protest, we are faced with a future in which social hierarchies will find fewer and fewer challengers.

Marshall was prophetic. There are some 45,000 shopping malls today, 10 times the number there were in 1968. There are now thousands of private gated communities housing some 30 million Americans that offer no rights of public protest or free speech at all. With the ascendancy of television and now the Internet, the communication of ideas in our society through face-to-face encounters in the public spaces of cities seems increasingly like a quaint remainder of an earlier time.

The Court always assumed that there would be enough public places where even the most disempowered could have their words heard. The only problem would be the clashing of multiple state interests — the right to free speech versus the rights of private property owners.

The irony of the mall cases is that the Court majority were the only participants in the cases who did not see the malls as public forums. Certainly citizens recognize malls as the "downtowns" of their suburbs. And mall owners cultivate the notion that they are building the "new" downtowns and community centers because they know that notion brings in customers. Indeed, malls are often expressly designed to recreate the physical appearance of the downtowns that suburban residents left behind. Malls also promote activities — such as football rallies, legislative candidate speeches, community meetings, senior walks — that bolster their claim to be the new downtowns, and thus endear themselves to their shoppers. Malls have been willing beneficiaries of their role as public forums; they just refuse to assume all of the obligations.

But increasingly, even our cities and towns are shedding these obligations and responsibilities. "Traditional" public forums — parks, streets, and sidewalks — are virtually disappearing from suburban communities. Take, for example, Bedminster, a typical suburban community in New Jersey, which has no public parks for recreation or gathering because its three-acre-lot zoning regulations makes those spaces seem "redundant." And in our

photo: Devin Asch

Public Protest

big cities, the sidewalks, city-hall steps, plazas, and public parks that have traditionally been used for protest have been transformed from relatively unpoliced public places to carefully watched districts. Jeremy Bentham's 1787 Panopticon — an influential vision of a prison where inmates could be watched in their every movement — is no longer influencing institutional design. But the electronic panopticon is under construction in buildings and cities across America.

September 11 has only sped along changes that have been taking place for two decades. We can expect in the coming years that defensible design will be a growth industry. The most important public spaces of our cities will be recorded and restricted with ever greater vigilance. Access will be curtailed (as happened to the symbolically powerfully front steps of New York's City Hall under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani). Police barricades to "protect" objects of protest — such as during the anti-war protests at the United Nations in February of this year — will become more common.

Given the continued growth of suburbs and the increasing privatization of formerly public functions, is it not possible that there may be a time when the United States is dotted with cities where the ideal of free speech will remain a hollow principle? We are creating a perplexing paradox: at one time, public forums existed without completely free speech. Now we are now faced with the opposite problem: we can say anything, but there is nowhere to speak.

This might be our future. But there is much evidence flowing against Marshall's prediction of the inevitable decline of traditional places of protest in cities and the inexorable rise and dominance of the "functional equivalents" of town centers in the suburbs. Despite threats by governments all too eager to limit raucous dissent, public protests in our cities have had a renaissance and are becoming increasingly important to contemporary political debate. Despite regular predictions of the imminent destruction of public life in cities due to the growing dominance of the computer, many of our most volatile political issues are being aired in public spaces. We need only think of the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in 1999, parades concerning the fate of Elian Gonzalez in Miami, demonstrations in New York against police brutality, and the massive anti-war protests in Washington, New York City, and dozens of cities across the country this past year. The news of the death of public protest in the city, it turns out, has been exaggerated.

In fact, despite the suburbanization and "wiring" of American life, despite e-mail petitions and the proliferation of political Web sites — those impersonal and mediated exchanges of ideas across the information highway — public protest in urban places has surged back to become a significant factor in the political life of the nation. Indeed, the very explosion of the Internet and increasingly private ways of being political have provoked a healthy backlash, a return to loud and confrontational public protest. As it turns out, you can flame your legislator online, but it doesn't yield the same satisfaction — or political effect — as a little face-to-face yelling.

But the renaissance is precarious. If the encroachment on the free use of public space continues, and courts refuse to turn back restrictive laws on public assembly, the decline that Thurgood Marshall foresaw might yet become reality.

E.B. White, who got most things right, once said of New York that "it offered the gift of privacy." But truly, our great cities first and foremost offer the gift of crowds. Crowds can be chaotic, but sometimes they walk in the same direction and for the same purpose, finding political strength in public protest on public streets. ■ ■ ■

Max Page is an assistant professor of architecture and history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He is the author of *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), winner of the 2001 Spiro Kostof Award of the Society of Architectural Historians. He is also co-editor of *Building the Nation: Americans Write about Their Architecture, Their Cities, and Their Environment, 1789 to the Present* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

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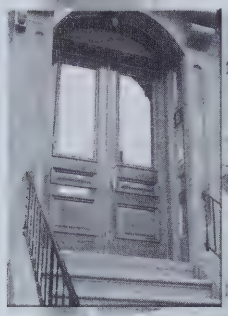

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As Seen On TV

Television and the design of class distinctions

By Robert David Sullivan

top photo: Chris Haston
airdate: Tuesdays on NBC (9 p.m. ET)

bottom photo: Chris Haston
airdate: Thursdays on NBC (9 p.m. ET)

floor plan courtesy: Mark Bennett

On television sitcoms, the rich have nothing to hide. They don't need shades on their windows or walls around their kitchens. Leave it to the lower classes to worry about privacy. It makes sense when you think about it. After all, we know from all those British dramas on PBS that the rich have a tradition of servants wandering in and out of their lives.

Television gives us cues about how to cultivate an appearance of success — most overtly in commercials, but also in the sitcoms we watch weekly (or nightly, thanks to reruns). Many of us are more familiar with the dwellings of TV characters than those of our neighbors, and it's tempting to see *Friends* or *Frasier* as a standard for the good life.

There are occasional views of working-class households. During the 1970s, *All in the Family*'s Archie Bunker railed at "pinkos" and minorities from his tattered brown armchair, which was next to a table just large enough to hold an ashtray and a can of beer. But the living-room sets on most current sitcoms are centered around couches — large enough for romantic partners, obnoxious friends, and the occasional guest star involved in some 30-minute misunderstanding. Think of the Bunker furnishings, which *All in the Family* creator Norman Lear deliberately limited to sepia tones, and you think of life's similarly limited possibilities. Now think of the set on a current popular sitcom, *Will & Grace*, which includes a chrome refrigerator, a glass-topped coffee table, and — front and center — a sleek gray couch with bright pillows. Gay attorney Will Truman's apartment is not the home of someone with income problems, and it doesn't suggest someone pining for the morals of the pre-hippie era.

The title character of another long-running sitcom, *Frasier*, is a psychiatrist and condo owner who loves his view of the Seattle skyline and his "eclectic" furnishings. ("This sofa is an exact replica of the one Coco Chanel had in her Paris atelier," he brags.) In the first episode, his father, a retired cop, moves in and brings along a recliner with gaudily striped upholstery. Dad points out that the Barcalounger makes the decor even more eclectic, but Frasier is appalled by any change in his carefully ordered home. Frasier allows the chair to stay, but then he *has* to for the viewer's benefit: It's a reminder of one of the show's main themes, the tension between upper-income and working-class mindsets.

Frasier's mild satire of class values is unusual among contemporary sitcoms, most of which dazzle us with bright, airy apartments and expensive furniture. *Friends* is more typical of the genre. When the series began in 1994, most of the action took place on two sets: a large

Manhattan apartment inhabited by Monica and Rachel, two young women with low-paying jobs but apparently large bank accounts, and a smaller apartment across the hall inhabited by bachelors Joey and Chandler and dominated by two brown recliners. Eventually, Chandler married Monica and moved his recliner across the hall, but to Monica's relief, it broke a few episodes later. The upward economic mobility of the couple — Monica was now an acclaimed chef — was symbolized by the triumph of the couch. (Not surprisingly, the Barcalounger company seems a little defensive these days. Its Web site claims: "The reclining chair business isn't what it used to be. It isn't Archie Bunker" — even though Archie's chair was not a recliner at all, let alone a Barcalounger.)

Monica's apartment on *Friends*, like Will's on *Will & Grace*, combines the living, dining, and kitchen areas. There doesn't appear to be much closet space, but the characters don't mind putting their possessions on display. An obvious influence on the set designs is the 1990s hit *Seinfeld*, in which the title character stored his extensive collection of cereal boxes in kitchen cabinets with glass doors. *Friends* goes even further: Monica has no kitchen cabinets at all, just shelves that put all of her possessions on view. It's as if she lives in the showroom of a Pottery Barn.

Are such apartments becoming more common in real life? About a year ago, looking for a new apartment in Boston, I noticed that almost all of the recently renovated units lacked walls between the kitchen and living room. (One management company confirmed that walls were coming down throughout its properties.) Perhaps it was my time watching *Friends* that made these apartments seem so appealing — and made me forget the cleaning demands associated with having the stove in the same room as a sofa.

I don't want to suggest any conspiracy here. Hollywood isn't necessarily trying to persuade us that loft-style apartments are more fashionable — and *sexier* — than suburban houses. It's simply easier to choreograph farcical situations when characters can open unlocked apartment doors and see things they shouldn't see. The comedy-drama *Ally McBeal* took this rule to an extreme: The title character, a Boston attorney, worked in an office with a unisex bathroom — ridiculously large and full of gleaming chrome — that helped along all kinds of sexual liaisons.

Sitcoms with financially strapped characters seem to follow a different model. *The King of Queens* and *The Drew Carey Show* feature separate kitchens, traditional cabinets, curtained windows, and relatively colorless furniture. There are also striking differences between the two main sets on *Everybody Loves Raymond*, set in a Long Island suburb. A successful sportswriter with a wife and three kids, Raymond has a house similar in size to that of his parents, but only Raymond has glass kitchen cabinets, and he doesn't have a door between the kitchen and living room. The walls in the older couple's house represent secrecy and shame, while the more open atmosphere in Raymond's home represents his (only partly successful) attempt to transcend his parents' puritanical attitudes.

If TV sitcoms represent our daydreams (fun friends, comfy couches, no-strings sex), TV dramas are more likely to represent our nightmares (dead bodies, contagious diseases, flings that turn into remakes of *Fatal Attraction*). So it's telling that a violent mobster drama, *The Sopranos*, is one of the few shows to feature the fastest-growing type of housing in America. It's also one of the few dramas that include frequent scenes in the main character's home. That home is a McMansion in New Jersey with all the conveniences of modern living, including an entertainment area with a big-screen TV. There's also a long winding driveway that helps to hide the house from the street. The first episode of each season opens with Tony Soprano treading his way down that driveway in his bathrobe to get the newspaper, warily wondering what he'll encounter in the outside world that day. Tony's castle-on-a-hill suggests paranoia and suspicion, a mood that is obviously strengthened by his penchant for killing people with his bare hands. While few viewers can identify with Tony Soprano in terms of his line of work, part of the show's appeal may be in the way it conveys the limitations of suburban life. There are anecdotal reports of young professionals moving back into large cities and trying to create a safe but exciting neighborhood like the one seen on *Friends*, but census figures show that the world of *The Sopranos* is growing much faster.

Unfortunately, those who turn on the tube for tips on decorating for success may soon need to find new inspiration. TV sitcoms have been a bit less popular recently, crowded out in the ratings by "reality" game shows such as *Joe Millionaire*, which equate success with ruthlessness and deception, as well as gruesome murder mysteries such as *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. A few years ago, I might have decried the banality of sitcoms and their glamorized depictions of city life. They're no more authentic today, but now I see them as the most civilized programs on television. ■ ■ ■

Robert David Sullivan is an associate editor of *CommonWealth* magazine (www.massinc.org). He is a former television critic for *The Boston Phoenix*.

Facing page:

Background: ***All in the Family*** **set floor plan**

Top: **cast photo,** ***Frasier***

Bottom: **cast photo,** ***Will & Grace***

Bill Owens: Suburbia

by Elizabeth Padjen FAIA

In the late 1960s, photographer Bill Owens became intrigued with the growth of the suburbs and, more significantly, with the people who lived in them. The result of this fascination was *Suburbia*, the 1973 book that quickly became a cult classic.

Recently re-released ("New & Improved"), *Suburbia* has by now acquired the stature and gravitas of authentic cultural history. But its focus on people is what makes it still compelling, at once comic and poignant. It's fun to smile at the big hair and big cars. It's fun to recognize the goofy clothes, just now coming back into style. It's fun to peek at the mirrored ceilings and hot tubs of a generation that imagined it was reinventing sex.

But there's poignancy, too, in the dreams of an expanding middle class that Owens managed to capture with an appealing combination of ironic distance and empathetic engagement. People struggle to pay bills, worry about their kids, try to contribute to their community. They take pride in their houses, in well-tended lawns, in family dinners. They anguish over divorce, gender roles, alienated kids, war.

In short, strip away the period accoutrements, and *Suburbia* inadvertently offers a reflection of today's suburban middle class — the mirrored ceiling of a generation that imagines it's reinventing life in the suburbs.

Bill and Janet Owens, 1970
A former newspaper photographer, Bill Owens first published *Suburbia* in 1973, followed by *Working*, and *Our Kind of People*. The recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1976, he later founded and operated a brew pub in Hayward, California. Today he is the publisher of *American Brewer Magazine* and is working on a new book, *Leisure, Americans at Play*. His Web site is: www.billowens.com

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

The best way to help your city government and have fun is to come out on a Saturday morning and pull weeds in a median strip.

People throw away a lot of good things: clothes, toys, broken toasters, record players, and in the newer areas they throw out tables and chairs that don't fit in their new house. The ecology movement doesn't matter.

I make over $250 in Coke bottles. People here can't realize there are poor people in the world. They can't think about the needs of other people.

All photos on pages 26-29,
© Bill Owens, 1973 and 1999

Reproduced with permission from *Suburbia* by Bill Owens Fotofolio, 1999

I believe organized sports make better citizens of children. I have four boys and they all play baseball and soccer.

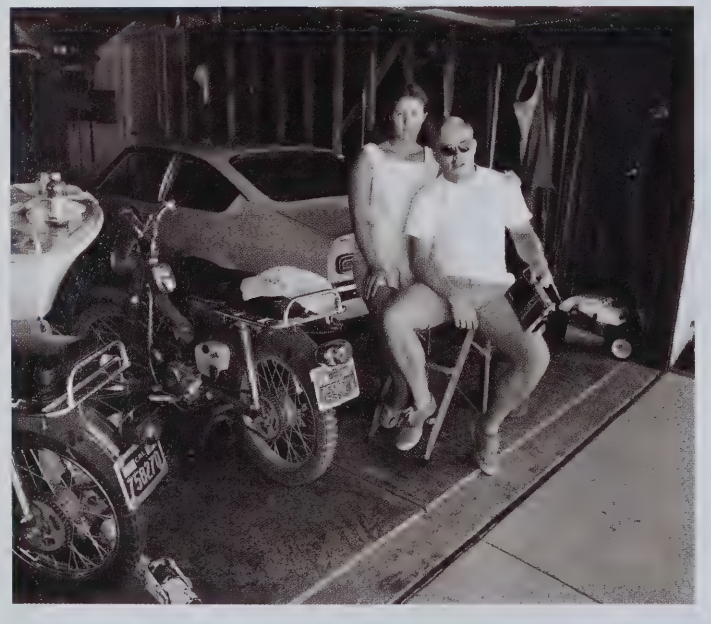
They learn to cooperate with others... and that winning isn't always the most important thing to do.

My husband, Pat, has a theory about watering our newly seeded lawn.

The water has to trinkle from heaven and fall like tender rain drops...otherwise the lawn won't grow properly.

If Bank of America knew the truth…

I find a sense of freedom in the suburbs… You assume the mask of suburbia for outward appearances and yet no one knows what you really do.



We enjoy having these things.

This isn't what we really want — the tract house, the super car, etc.… But as long as we are wound up in this high-speed environment, we will probably never get out of it!

We don't need the super car to be happy; we really want a small place in the country where you can breathe the air.

We've been married two months and everything we own is in this room.

The furniture is worn out. Don and Tom have grown up and soon will leave for college. Pat will have to cook for two.

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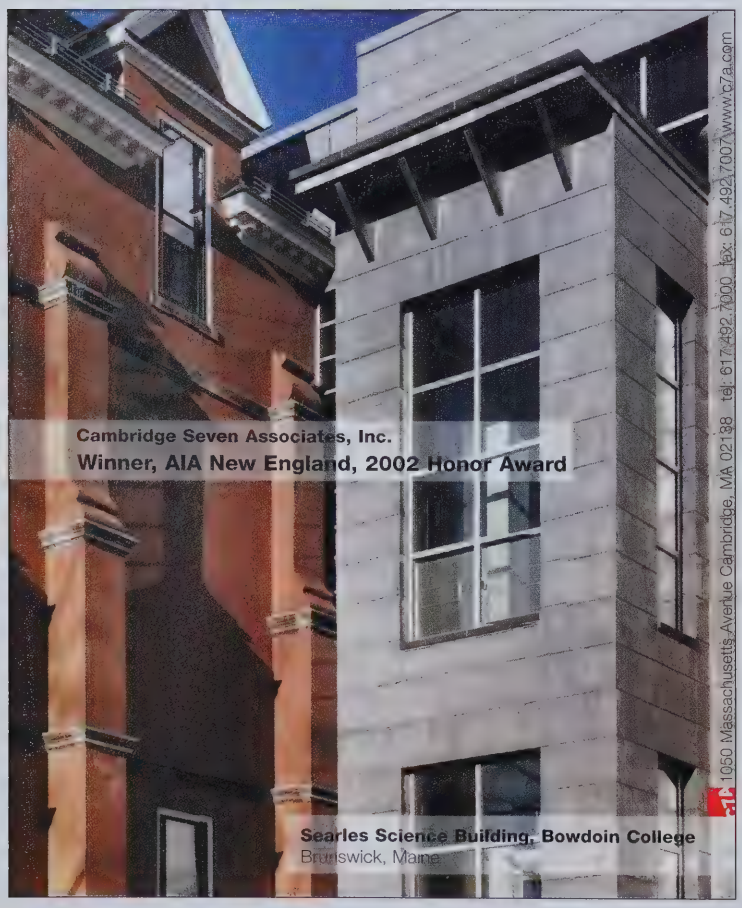

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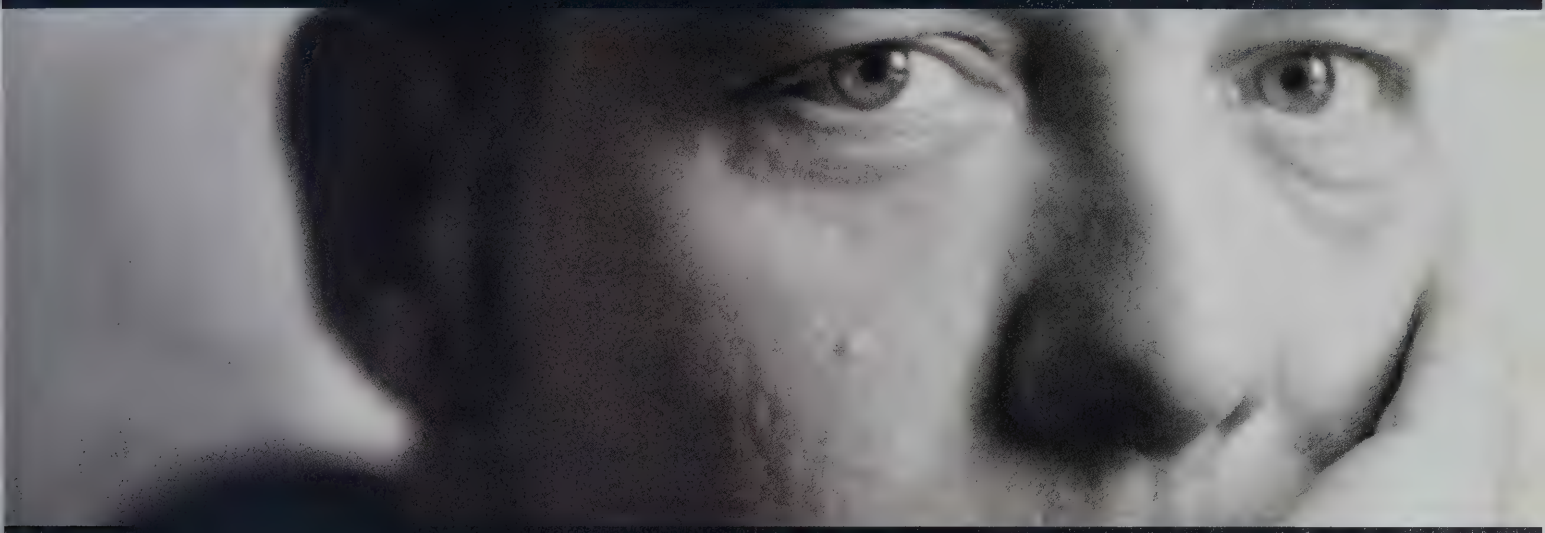

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Moisture in New England houses

by Stephen Smulski, PhD

photos: courtesy Stephen Smulski

Poor air sealing and leaky HVAC ductwork allowed hot, humid air inside the pool enclosure (above) of this hilltop mansion in Connecticut to flow into the ceiling and walls. The resulting condensation caused unsightly extractive staining of its painted mahogany exterior (background).

Whether you're a corporate mogul or a struggling wage-earner, if you've built or bought a new house recently, chances are that you have more in common with your counterpart at the other end of the economic spectrum than you realize. The occurrence of moisture-caused problems in New England's energy-efficient wood-frame houses has skyrocketed over the past 20 years. Owners complain of window condensation and mold indoors; of mildew and peeling of exterior coatings; and of rot in windows, doors, trim, siding, sheathing, and framing — all within a few years of construction. Water passes in and out of all wood-frame houses according to immutable laws of physics. It shows no deference to the occupants' social standing and makes no accommodation for selling price or aesthetics, as the residents of condos and custom McMansions alike can attest.

Tighter walls, colder walls

Historically, and perhaps unwittingly, the architects, builders, and occupants of New England's wood-frame houses relied upon natural leakage of air as a means of controlling indoor relative humidity and keeping walls dry and relatively problem-free. The rapid evolution of building materials and construction practices in the 20th century, however, occasioned the creation of houses whose walls became progressively tighter and colder.

The 1920s brought the addition of insulation, and the 1940s and '50s brought the switch from lath-and-plaster to gypsum board and from lumber sheathing to plywood — all reducing the passage of air and heat through walls. The introduction in the 1960s and later of low-draft furnaces and power-vented, sealed heating appliances killed the active chimney which formerly expelled large volumes of moisture-laden indoor air and caused drier outdoor air to be drawn inside. Innovations such as vapor retarders, air-infiltration barriers, caulks, and gaskets in the 1970s and '80s produced further tightening. The upshot is that the walls of New England's older houses — those built before the energy crisis of the 1970s — tend to be leakier, warmer, and more forgiving of getting wet, while those of newer houses tend to be tighter, colder, and less forgiving.

Water from within

The benefit of tight walls is a marked increase in energy-efficiency and occupant comfort. The downside is a reduced rate of natural ventilation. An older house often has 3 to 5 or more air changes per hour; a newer house might have only 0.5 to 1. As a result, water vapor generated by occupants' activities and released from other interior sources lingers longer indoors and is carried into walls, floors, ceilings, attics, basements, and crawl spaces on convection currents of air flowing through joints and penetrations. When warm, moist air entering into these spaces is cooled below the dew point, the excess moisture is deposited as condensation on framing, sheathing, and other cold surfaces, creating conditions favorable to mold and wood-rotting fungi. Ditto for water vapor diffusing into these spaces.

In New England, condensation inside houses can occur during both the heating and cooling seasons. Condensation on windows and within walls, floors, ceilings, and attics happens mostly during the heating season, and usually because of excessively high indoor relative humidity (above about 40 percent). In summer, water vapor held in hot, humid outdoor air entering basements and crawl spaces, especially those under air-conditioned houses, can condense on framing and subflooring, creating conditions irresistible to fungi.

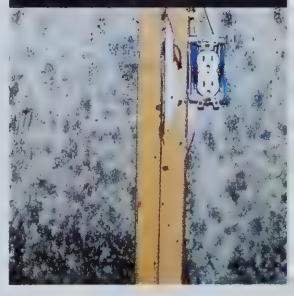
Condensation-caused problems are kept in check by lowering indoor relative humidity by: minimizing moisture sources; sealing air leakage paths; placing vapor retarders on the inboard side of walls, ceilings, and floors; venting clothes dryers, heating appliances, and kitchen and bath exhaust fans directly outside; and by providing the needed ceiling insulation and roof and attic ventilation. The treat-the-symptoms-only approach of dehumidification is a last resort.

Water from without

Siding, trim, windows, doors, and other exterior wood products are routinely exposed to dew, rain, and melt water. Because their faces are typically finished with a film-forming coating such as paint or a solid-color stain that repels liquid water, the underlying wood is generally wetted only superficially. However, liquid water can be driven by wind or drawn by capillary suction into uncoated wood inside joints and overlaps to wet products internally from the ends or back. Because water

photos: courtesy Stephen Smulski

The buyers of these New Hampshire condominiums were stunned to find mold (below) growing inside the firewalls between units only two months after moving in. Delay in closing-in the roof is to blame.



photos courtesy Stephen Smulski

Chronic peeling paint on this Massachusetts Colonial signals a hidden moisture problem. Lack of back- and end-priming on cedar siding allowed rain to be drawn into the overlap between courses by capillary suction. Water vapor from the siding passed through the housewrap and wetted the sheathing.

enters wood as a liquid, but exits as vapor, exterior wood products get wet much faster than they dry. Exterior wood products on energy-efficient houses take even longer to dry because of the reduced airflow through tight walls and their generally lower temperature.

Paint and solid-color stains on the face of exterior wood retard the escape of water vapor into the air. Housewrap and sheathing behind exterior wood slows its movement inward, while the vapor retarder deeper in the wall essentially stops it altogether. Rather than drying out exterior wood completely, heat from the sun drives some of the water to the back of the product. The sun can propel water vapor through the housewrap, where it is absorbed by sheathing and transferred to framing. Through repeated wettings, enough water eventually accumulates in exterior wood to raise its moisture content to the point at which the coating mildews, stains, blisters, and peels, or the wood rots. Sheathing and framing behind exterior wood can temporarily store only so much water before they, too, become susceptible to mold and rot.

Precipitation-caused problems are avoided by installing siding according to the rain-screen principle. This involves creating a vented air space between the housewrap and siding into which water driven by the sun to the back of the siding can harmlessly evaporate. The gap is formed with furring strips or a three-dimensional plastic mesh. This same principle is employed for wooden shakes and shingles.

The recent prevalence of questionable architectural trends such as the narrowing of eaves and a reluctance to use gutters has left many houses vulnerable to precipitation-caused problems. Devolution of the roofed porch into the open deck and the popularity of complicated roofs with multiple intersecting planes, valleys, and dormers, for instance, promote the wetting of walls by splashing.

Design features that promote water-shedding include steep roof pitches, flashing at roof/wall intersections and in valleys, chimney crickets, wide eaves, door and window flashings with drip edges, and beveled horizontal trim. The ends and backs of siding, trim, windows, and other exterior wood products should be finished with a water repellent or primer. Gutters prevent water running off a roof from cascading down walls and minimize the amount of water that splashes back onto walls from a lower roof, deck, or the ground.

Water from below

Soil surrounding a house's foundation and floor slab always contains water. Liquid water seeps into basements and crawl spaces through shrinkage and settlement cracks, joints, and penetrations in foundation walls and floors. It is pulled by capillary suction through the micropores inside concrete and masonry. Water vapor in soil diffuses inward. Once inside a basement or crawl space, water raises the ambient relative humidity, which in turn, can elevate the moisture content of framing and subflooring to mold-susceptible levels.

Liquid water is kept out of basements and crawl spaces by installing perimeter drains, sealing cracks and penetrations, applying waterproofing to the exterior of walls, backfilling with free-draining soil, grading soil so that it slopes away from the foundation, and by mounting gutters along eaves. Control of capillarity and diffusion involves applying dampproofing to the exterior of walls and installing a vapor retarder under the floor slab or over exposed soil in a crawl space. Rising damp — capillary migration of water from the soil through the footing into the base of a wall — is mitigated by placing polyethylene over the footing before walls are built.

The consequences of moisture problems range from mild inconvenience to — in cases of significant structural damage or severe health reactions to molds — personal catastrophe. The rush to new building products and practices — and in some cases, simply the rush to build — have created a range of problematic conditions, some well-intentioned, others due to simple shoddiness. A house still represents the largest single investment for most Americans. The value of that asset will always be subject to economic forces but, rich or poor, homeowners should not need to risk durability as well. ■ ■ ■

For more information:

Energy & Environmental Building Association
www.eeba.org

Northeast Sustainable Energy Association
www.nesea.org

National Association of Home Builders
www.nahb.com

Moisture Control Handbook by Joseph Lstiburek and John Carmody (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993)

Stephen Smulski, PhD, is president of Wood Science Specialists Inc. in Shutesbury, Massachusetts, a consulting firm that specializes in solving performance problems with wood products.

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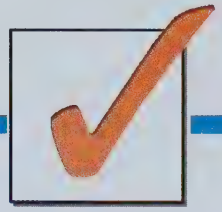

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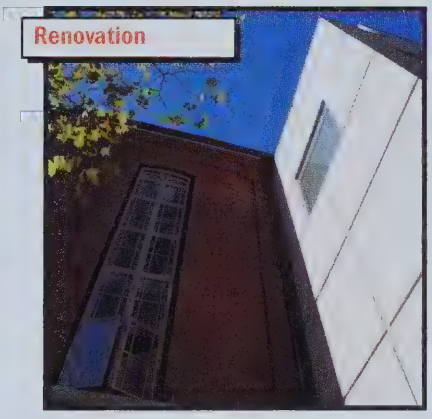

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You're Only 2 Blocks Away From A More Impressive Project.

Class Act

Michael Pyatok FAIA talks with John King

Design:
Pyatok Architects Inc.

East Oakland, California

Affordable housing
above street-level offices

photos courtesy Pyatok Architects Inc

Michael Pyatok FAIA is the principal of Pyatok Architects Inc. based in Oakland, California, and Seattle, where is he is also a professor of architecture at the University of Washington. A former Loeb Fellow and Fulbright Fellow, Pyatok is one of the nation's leading advocates for affordable housing and community-based design.

John King is the urban design writer for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and a frequent contributor to *ArchitectureBoston*.

KING: As an architect who has been concerned for decades with issues such as affordable housing, community revitalization, and supporting community-based businesses, what is your reaction to the current architectural world? Arguably the most discussed project last year was a Prada store in Soho, and the most important architectural trend is cities trying to allure celebrity architects to somehow put them on the map.

PYATOK: Well, the issues you mentioned have occupied my thoughts for 40 years. I went to architecture school from '61 through '67, during the Vietnam War and the civil-rights movement, and got drawn into those protests and all those concerns. I mapped that back into my personal life and career and began asking myself how I was going

to live my life so as not to perpetuate those wrongs — how could I develop a career as an architect in a world where most of the commissions are dictated by wealthy or powerful folks interested in things other than social and economic justice? I came from a working-class background, a welfare family, and grew up in the tenements of Brooklyn. When I came out of school I worked for RTKL because it was considered an up-and-coming firm integrating urban design, architecture, and landscape architecture into a team approach. We were working on a lot of central business districts and with the stroke of a Magic Marker, we were wiping out entire neighborhoods. They were like the neighborhood that I grew up in. I wondered, what am I doing here? So I quit.

KING: And then what?

PYATOK: Fortunately, I got a teaching position at Penn State and that's when I started experimenting with studios — linking students and community groups who needed help, usually at the scale of urban design, neighborhood revitalization, and new central business districts, but who generally had limited funds and were based in low-income communities. I found that there are ways of providing a service to these communities and developing methods of analyzing problems and engaging the residents so that there's real participation in decision-making. So decisions are not made only by developers and local officials. That's a functional description of what I was trying to do in practice, but at the same time, I was always thinking about our culture. I had a friend who was a neo-Marxist, who turned me on to the literature of the Frankfurt school, a kind of cultural critique from the Marxist perspective. I found it very useful to try to understand the cultural impacts of economic disparities, how they affect the invention of ideas, and then their flow and distribution in the larger society.

KING: You could apply that concept to parallel universes in the design field. One is the universe of "high design" and its almost relentless pursuit of the "new look" year after year. And then there is another universe of economic disparity and the associated problems that you're talking about. How do you cope with the difference? Do you just look for the isolated victory, or do you despair the larger picture?

PYATOK: If you focus solely on the larger picture and on the all-encompassing influence of power and money and the way it is distributed in our culture, you feel like it's a pretty hopeless task. So you focus on the day-by-day. The small victories. We as a society under a capitalist system tend to be idealistic in that we really believe that ideas get invented by individuals, by great minds, isolated from involvement in the real world. That's a very good justification for having a class of people who are not engaged, who are not breaking their backs and working with their hands, but whose labor and time and intellectual capacity are free to invent. The more you are detached from the real world, the more likely you are to be creative and inventive and, therefore, useful to society. It's a very convenient model. It thrives on the mind/body split — anything associated with the mind and intellectual activity is superior to any activity that is immersed in the everyday mundane world of survival. And it reinforces a class society. It tells us that there are only a few at the top who really know what's going on and as for everybody else — well, you're just going to have to go along for the ride because you're too distracted by the mundane to really reach the heights of great intellectual creativity.

KING: In other words, Renzo Piano or Rem Koolhaas or Daniel Libeskind can fly into town and impart knowledge that is beyond the abilities of mere working architects.

PYATOK: Right. Those from the local area could never possibly understand the condition fully because they're too immersed in it. They have not reached the heights of Parnassus to be able to look down on it all and understand it from the global view.

On the other hand is the view that if you are immersed in reality, you are in a much better position to develop a knowledge of how the world works. And there's truth to that position as well. Taken to the extreme, though, it means anybody who is freed from real-world tasks is useless. We saw that in the purges in China, and we saw that with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia — anybody who had participated in math, science, literature, anything of intellectual importance for the future of their country, was killed. These two extreme positions are equally damaging to a well-balanced society. So you somehow have to integrate the two. I know that seems easy to say.

KING: You've been immersed in a lot of reality and know a lot about how the world works. What have you learned from working with community groups? Or to take it to a more subtle level, what have you learned about the ways buildings shape self-image?

PYATOK: It comes down first to the question of engaging people in the process. What you're doing is taking people like myself who have received an advanced education, who've been granted the privilege of detaching themselves from the working world for six years to hone their skills, and asking them to give shape to what people desire. That's usually relatively easy to do with people who want to build their own house — the high-end custom folks. But how do you do that with a neighborhood when there are 100 participants? My firm has developed three-dimensional modeling techniques. If we have 80 people, we break them into groups of ten. We build a model of the larger neighborhood context and another of the site as an insert so they see all the physical conditions. And then in a series of workshops those small groups begin to discover ways of fitting things on the site.

"...there are ways of providing a service to these communities and developing methods of analyzing problems and engaging the residents so that there's real participation in decision-making.

So decisions are not made only by developers and local officials."

— Michael Pyatok FAIA

photos: courtesy Pyatok Architects Inc.

It engages them in a physical activity instead of having them listen passively to a series of options that we present. They get a chance to see the consequences so they have a sounder base for making judgments. I should say that we do lots of preliminary studies in our office, so we know what the range of options is before we start. After two or three workshops, there generally is a pattern that emerges that everyone can agree to. It's always something that we can never predict. And of course it reflects that particular mix of those people at that time. But at least it reflects a broad consensus from a host of people and not just some preconceptions by professionals who may in fact have been driven by cultural preferences inherited from God knows what source.

KING: And once that's done, do you take it from there?

PYATOK: Not yet. The next round of discussions is about the units themselves, how the dwellings themselves get organized within this site plan. One group might start out with kitchen, dining, living, and sleeping areas upstairs. So we make sure another group reverses that. Or we'll suggest moving one of those bedrooms downstairs — you might want to rent it out and get some income, or have a home business, or have the grandparents living there. We try to throw in ideas like that to upset whatever cultural predispositions they might have. Sometimes they come up with ideas that are new for us as well. Someone says, "You know, we never had rooms where we came from in the old country; we all lived as one happy family in one big room. This is going to fragment us if we have to have all of these separate rooms." So we have to explain how all the funding sources, particularly government ones, are expecting only two kids per room and that after the age of five, they can't be the same sex in the same room. It's a good airing of what their concerns are, even if we can't always accommodate them.

KING: So you're not just parroting what they assume is the way to do it.

PYATOK: Right. And then the third and last set of workshops is, "What's this place going to look like?"

KING: And do people really care about that?

PYATOK: Oh, yeah. They want it to fit the neighborhood. Most of the time they don't want a weird-looking place. They certainly don't want "a project." I can remember one group — a Latino group in San José — and the way we handled it. There were about 60 people involved in six groups. We gave them each 28 images that were organized into seven categories. The seven categories were typical California styles — Victorian, neo-Victorian, Craftsman, Mission, and so on, including contemporary styles. We asked them to pick their favorite image.

KING: So have you found an all-embracing image of the good life?

PYATOK: No, it varies from group to group. What was interesting about this group was that they all chose the same image! It was a street view, sidewalk view, looking down a row of townhouses that had been articulated enough to look like separate houses. They all had porches and bay windows. It was what we called a contemporary interpretation of a Craftsman feel. And they loved it. Remember, this is in San José. They are surrounded by stucco buildings. And they said, "These stucco buildings are fake. They pretend to be Mission, which is some interpretation of our adobe in Mexico, but you're not building them with two-foot-thick walls, you build them with four-inch walls. But we've seen houses like this Craftsman style that were designed and built here."

KING: It sounds like you're talking about ways people's aspirations are reflected in architecture. But are these tastes in effect imposed from above? If you let people work from the bottom up, are we likely to see more variety?

PYATOK: I do believe that. If people are shown their choices, they may not always take the experimental approach, but at least they had a chance to see it. Often they don't even get to see what's possible. And that's one of the benefits of the architecture profession. We can invent things that are different from what is produced by those who have found a profitable formula and just keep repeating it. But I'd be quick to add that a lot of the novelty that our profession generates is pretty frivolous, silly stuff. That's usually because we're under the employ of a segment of society that is out of touch.

KING: Isn't that novelty in itself a subtle expression of class? You might argue that it's the equivalent of the person with the good income who wants a nice mock Tudor house in the suburbs because that shows they've made it. Someone else with the same income level buys the loft in the Leather District with a stark, retro, 1927 look because it's Modern. But it also shows they've made it.

PYATOK: This is one of the reasons why for so many years in my own development as an architect I could not even get myself to use the term "style." I refused to accept it as a legitimate concern of a serious architect. We have social problems, we have economic problems, and that's what we should be addressing. This whole question of style comes from the superficial world of fashion. It invents novelty for its own sake and is not really making useful, creative changes to the basic problems of our society. But as I did more and more buildings, and worked with community groups, there was always that question — "What's this going to look like?" And in the end, the answer is not based on social and economic concerns.

KING: You've written a lot about some of the disquiet you feel with the execution of urbanism, the doctrine that there is an accepted style, that there is a good style as opposed to a bad style. How does this shake out? You're saying appearance does count for something.

PYATOK: You know what is interesting? I told you what the Latino group in San José liked the most. I didn't tell you what they liked the least. What they liked the least was buildings by Legoretta and Barragán — this Modernist interpretation of Latino roots and Mexican roots, which we architects love because it distills everything down to the purest forms of pleasure — simple shapes and textures and light and color, and no need for unnecessary decoration. But they couldn't identify with that at all. It was so cerebral that they hated it. You can say it's a class thing, but it can get to a point where architects want to strip out so much of the exuberance of life to create an effect — whether it's Barragán or Andres Duany's New Urbanism — that they create straitjackets for what really goes on in everyday life. We all look at those architectural photographs of interiors of houses and scratch our heads and wonder, who the hell lives like that? The world doesn't look that way. I spend most Christmases with my wife traveling through third-world countries. We want to see how people are surviving under marginal conditions. These cities are incredibly intense, thriving, throbbing-with-life places. And every inch of street frontage is in use with workshops or retail outlets or eateries. No piece of the ground floor of a building is ever empty, because everybody is hungry, literally, looking for ways of surviving and using that opportunity to grab onto the life on the street to earn a few pennies. We in this country struggle to find ways of reactivating our own streets because of the Wal-Marts and the Home Depots and all the others that have sucked it all away. Which, by the way, then causes architects and urban designers to come up with new theories of how the city ought to look in order to adjust to an economic system that has deprived us of these true urban opportunities.

KING: You wrote an interesting article back in 1993 — "Architecture in a Commodity Culture" — that relates a bit to this, but I'd like to push the idea a little more. You talked about how people are conditioned to define their self-image, not only by what they do for a living, but also by the things they consume and possess, and the things in which they enclose themselves. How does architecture reinforce this?

PYATOK: If you look at the way private developers market housing, whether it's multi-family or single-family, they'll talk about the sizzle and the curb appeal. Gestures that are built purely to sucker in people. There are obvious cases of it — the grand soaring ceiling in a space that no one will ever really use. At that income level, you would think the buyers deserve more — more choice. And given the choice, you'd think they would want better design, better detailing, and better materials, not more space.

KING: You work with community groups. You work in a thicket of regulations. Is there a part of you that would love to have some multi-millionaire call and say, "Build me a house!" "Build me a little bistro"?

PYATOK: There are times when I'm on an awards jury when I see materials and methods of construction we could never do, because we don't have the client base, and I start drooling. We generally have avoided working with private developers. But if you're doing non-profit rental housing, you'll get 12, 15 takers for every unit. You can experiment and it will still rent out. It's different when a person is making a choice about an investment in a house. The pressure to be more conservative is greater.

Design:
Pyatok Architects Inc.

East Oakland, California

Mixed-use solution: ground-floor retail and social services; buildings with elevators for smaller households; townhomes grouped around courtyards for larger families

photos courtesy Pyatok Architects Inc

KING: That seems to fold back into the idea that communities have expectations, and that style at some level reinforces self-perceptions about class. The neighbors each say, "This is my investment, and you will do nothing under any conceivable circumstances to affect my investment."

PYATOK: And that's the difference I see in third-world countries where a home is a working organism, not only for raising a family but also for earning an income. It becomes whatever it has to in order to suit all those needs. No one thinks about a house as about something you sell in the future as a commodity, and therefore no one is particularly concerned about meeting the criteria of some future buyer. You just decorate it and change it as you need to, and it gets a bit messy because of the kids, and messy because my husband is repairing cars here, and my mother is selling her shawls here, which she weaves out back. And I'll decorate it with flowers and paint it some colors. Here, no one goes outside the rules because it might hurt the sales base.

KING: Let's look at cities like Boston and San Francisco, the two most expensive areas in the nation to live. Both pride themselves on trying to come up with inclusionary housing rules. Both have a wealth of established non-profit housing organizations. Yet housing prices keep climbing. You've been working in this field for 30 years. Why haven't these well-meaning communities figured out a way to make housing work?

PYATOK: That's a really big question. In a market-driven economy, when something is desired and there's only so much of it, it's going to cost more. And the irony of the Bay Area and Boston is that as much as we complain about how things go wrong or aren't being done well, they're two beautiful cities. And we keep making them more and more beautiful. And that in turn just makes those cities that much more desirable to people who have money to spend. So then we have to triple the effort to make a little bit of room for people whose incomes don't allow them to participate in the market. Andres Duany sometimes says that the only way to make sure you'll get affordable housing is to make it ugly. In a market economy, this is true. But from the viewpoint of the families or the neighborhoods, you want it to be as good as or better than the housing around it.

Enlightened business leaders recognize that the more that families can find housing that easily fits their income, the less pressure there is on employers to push up wages to keep up with escalating housing costs. The more that wages have to go up just to feed the local housing industry, the less competitive local businesses are on the national or international scene. And then they are forced to move to less expensive cities. They don't want to do that, because their executives would be less happy in Missoula than they would be in Boston or San Francisco. We have to find a way to cream off the top and feed it back in because we need those workers and we want those industries. A lot of conservatives see affordable housing as a handout to lazy people. Until we can get beyond that, we're going to have a crisis in each of our successful cities. ■■■

Washington Hall, center stage for theatre and cultural events at Notre Dame. Built in 1881, this modern Gothic structure was named by Father Sorin himself, Notre Dame's founder, in honor of his great hero, George Washington.

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When the University of Notre Dame decided to replace the windows in two of the more historic buildings on its storied campus, all the major manufacturers wanted the job. But as they learned more about the size and scope of the project, the list began to dwindle. Since both buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places, Notre Dame wanted windows with wood interiors that matched the appearance and profile of the originals. To minimize maintenance, another demand was aluminum clad exteriors. Marvin Windows and Doors emerged victorious. And designed and built 310 windows for the project, not one of which was a standard size. Not only that, but the casings were factory applied and a custom color for the exterior cladding was developed to replicate the 100 year-old originals. If you have a challenging commercial project, contact the company that has a reputation for winning the tough ones.

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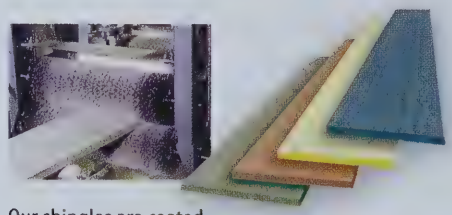

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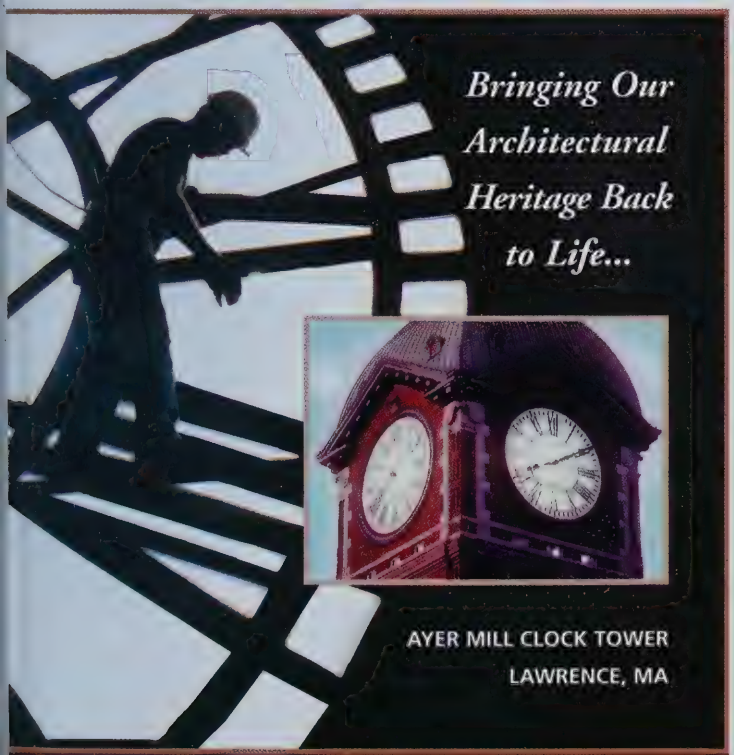

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Covering the Issues

Periodical roundup

by Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA

The color of money... The best way to boost the sale price of your client's home may not be those granite countertops or that new triple-height entryway, but all that green stuff outdoors. As one Massachusetts realtor suggests in *Smart Money* (March 2003), investing 5 percent of a home's value in new landscaping yields a 150 percent return. *Smart Money*'s cover story features a "special report" outlining the financial incentives of design options. Did you know that hedges raise property values 3.6 percent? A landscaped curb adds 4.4 percent? And a patio boosts values by 12.4 percent? Forget about making a house a home. It's an investment. You're not an architect, you're a financial planner.

Remember when?... Before there was Target, there was Michael Graves. Italian design giant Alessi introduced Graves and 10 colleagues to the wonders of product design by commissioning them to create a new teapot, thus giving birth to those knobby blue handles and the bird whistle, as well as to alternative directions to many architectural careers. In *I.D.*'s April cover story, "Pot Shots," guest editor Aric Chen reports that Alessi is revisiting this project 20 years later, this time commissioning 22 of today's stars for coffee- and tea-service prototypes. Invited participants range from Greg Lynn to MVRD, Zaha Hadid to Shigeru Ban (not using cardboard).

Collection agency... With much too little irony, Tom Vanderbilt questions the value of assembling brand-name architects in "Collector's Addition," in the same issue of *I.D.* Vanderbilt reports on the 36 Houses at Sagaponac, "the 100-acre Richard Meier-curated modernist subdivision," each house designed by a different starchitect. Claiming this "suburban subdivision... will represent the greatest concentration of architectural talent on the planet," Vanderbilt predicts the inevitable "Star Maps" and visitor tours. He recalls the origins of such high-profile collaborations at Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition, while questioning the current university fad of "collecting" hot designers as if they were Beanie Babies and pondering the extraordinary amount of energy the architectural profession spends on projects never realized. Which, of course, might explain the teapots.

Needs more work... With its March 2003 issue, *Sculpture* magazine launches an initiative to explore often overlooked relationships between sculpture and architecture. Both in practice and product, the magazine suggests the disciplines are the most public of arts, sharing as much today as they have for centuries. The magazine poses good questions: How does sculpture interact with architecture to shape the experience of a space? Where do the practical differences between the disciplines create friction, and how can that friction spark better work? Can the public charrette process guide these collaborations, too? Disappointingly, the magazine's pages so far offer little new dialogue. Let's hope the discussion is just warming up.

Been there, done that... What is the role of preservation in a contemporary, changing city? Unfortunately, Chinese cities are not asking, laments Orville Schell in *Mother Jones* (March/April). Bulldozers demolish traditional neighborhoods by the dozens, leaving high-rises in their wake that look more like Houston or Singapore. "Beijing was perhaps the most fabled and adored 'living' ancient city in the world," recalls Schell. Not anymore. "What is unrivaled is the single-minded, myopic way in which China has gone about reinventing itself," he argues, leading one to wonder: does progress always require erasure? Haven't we demonstrated that this is not really progress? James Wiltlow Delano's accompanying photo essay shows haunting, ethereal views of Chinese cities in dramatic transition.

Calling Big Dig watchers... Congressman Barney Frank once suggested that instead of burying the Central Artery in tunnels, Boston should have just raised the city. Turns out, Chicago has beat us to both ("Chicago's War With Water" by Daniel E. Capano in *Invention and Technology*, Spring 2003). In its centuries-old battle with storm water, sewers, and really big lakes, not only did Chicago once reconstruct 1,200 acres of downtown eight feet higher, but now it's building a gigantic tunnel, too. Copycats. Started in 1975, the 109 mile-long tunnel is slated for completion in 2010. ("Yeah, right," we say.)

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA teaches the architecture studios at Smith College and maintains a practice in Boston.

Books

Snobbery: The American Version

by Joseph Epstein

Houghton Mifflin Co., 2002

Reviewed by
James McCown

"I don't mind snobbery as long as I'm the snobber and not the snobbee," a late architect uncle of mine used to say. Such is our collective ambivalence about social class. Who has not felt the rush of being in the company of the glamorous and good-looking, and thinking, "I belong here"? By contrast, who has not felt the sting of that party invitation not received, that phone call not returned, that bid to join an exclusive club not proffered?

Joseph Epstein has written a wonderful, engaging book, one of piercing social observation, deft writing, and honest self-examination. He writes about growing up Jewish, attending an academically but not socially prestigious university, his many years on the fringes of the American literati. He peppers the book with his own experiences and shows himself enough of an outsider to speak objectively. A book on this same subject by a member of the august Aldrich family appeared in the late 1980s, but the writer was so inextricably a part of the American aristocracy that his attempt to chronicle it was rambling and fog-bound. Not so with Epstein, who gleefully skewers everyone and everything, not just the clichéd Bostonian Lowells and Cabots, but also the aristocracies that replaced them — the "diverse" Ivy League meritocracies, the Yuppie strivers, the celebrity-obsessed motion-picture industry.

There are many funny anecdotes and trenchant musings. What can be made of a country whose most successful fashion designer is a guy from Brooklyn who lives amidst the most opulent accoutrements of Anglophilia? Or of our Yankee blueblood president who prefers cowboy boots and fajitas to any suggestion of his Andover-and-Yale patrician background? A chapter on name-dropping is hilarious, including the author's relating of a story involving an American living in a French chateau: "Cooper delighted in telling friends, 'The Onassis woman tried to invade my house, but I sent her packing.' Now here is prime-quality name-dropping." My only disappointment with the book is its lack of geographic specificity. In other words, there's no look at Southern snobbery versus Yankee snobbery, or Eastern hauteur versus its Western equivalent.

"'Tis only noble to be good, and kind hearts are more than coronets," said Tennyson. And on this note, Epstein ends, reflecting on how difficult it is "to be reconciled to oneself, to be oneself and nothing more. This is especially difficult if doing so means conceding that one is not extraordinary, unusual, powerful, great, and shall in fact disappear tomorrow without leaving a scratch on the earth… Is there something in our nature that prevents us from cultivating this difficult but useful objectivity about our true standing in the world?"

James McCown is the director of communications and marketing for Schwartz/Silver Architects in Boston.

The Rise of the Creative Class

by Richard Florida

Basic Books, 2002

Reviewed by
Jeffrey Stein AIA

Why isn't a new Fenway Park under construction in Boston right now? Read this book! In this snapshot of "how it is now" in American culture and economy, Richard Florida, the John H. Heinz Professor of Regional Development at Carnegie Mellon, documents the values and attitudes of 30 million members of America's rising Creative Class. One value is the pursuit of a life packed with intense, high-quality, multidimensional experiences, a value at odds with watching professional baseball. Baseball is pretty much a one-dimensional experience that consumes a lot of resources — it's expensive and takes a big chunk of time. Not for the Creative Class!

Who are the Creative Class? Architects and designers, urban planners, artists, educators, engineers, entertainers, scientists, media-types, computer people, mathematicians, hairstylists all make up the "Super-Creative Core" of the current culture and economy. Further out on the creative limb are managers, business specialists, healthcare workers, high-end sales people, lawyers — the professionals who make up 38 percent of the American workforce. Then why are so many creative solutions regularly missed in every area of endeavor from world diplomacy to vehicle design to the design of cities and buildings? What are these people creating?

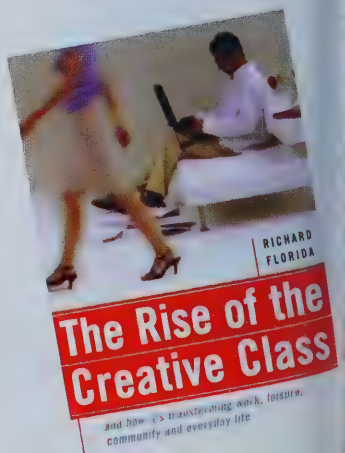
The Creative Class are not Biblically creative: "God created the world…" The basis of their creativity is economic: *how* people work creatively and *where* these people get together. "Creativity" is an act of synthesis. To create and synthesize, we need stimuli — bits and pieces to put together in new and unfamiliar ways. We need to meet people, see possibilities, access an environment that maximizes choices. We need cities with streetlife. (Jane Jacobs lives in this book.)

Florida's core argument is about the power of place in the current economy. Millions of workers are attracted to places where you can "have a life, not just a job" — creative centers like Boston, which is third on the Creativity List, just after San Francisco and Austin, Texas. These cities are centers of "technology, talent, and tolerance." (Although Boston ranks number 22 in "tolerance.")

"Tolerance" is the most widely discussed aspect of Florida's assertions: indispensable to the creative economy is tolerance of the gay community. Where gay people live predicts not only the concentration of high-tech industries, but also their future growth. But the book points out a negative correlation between concentrations of high-tech/professional firms and the percentage of non-white population. The result is that racial tolerance isn't so important to the Creative Class.

"Class is a dirty word in America," says Richard Florida. But for the Creative Class, more class awareness is required. Natural leaders for the 21st century, due to their numbers and control of our culture and economy, they should take seriously the obligations of leadership that accompany their position as the new standard-bearers.

Jeffrey Stein AIA is the architecture critic for *Banker and Tradesman* and winner of a New England Press Association Award for 2002.



Serendipity Green
by Rob Levandoski

The Permanent Press, 2000

Reviewed by
Julianna Waggoner

Who does Mr. Levandoski know, that *The New York Times* so favorably reviewed this poorly edited sitcom of a book?

A satirical glance at the politics of taste and class in small-town America, allegedly rife with humor and uproarious characterizations, *Serendipity Green* is instead cloddish in style, inconsistent in tone, and peppered with embarrassing typographical errors that make it difficult to discern editorial oversights from Levandoski's stylistic choices. Although this lampoon of aesthetic fads, small-town festivals, suburban sprawl, and ethnic grudges is lightly entertaining, the author's uneven approach obscures moments of genuine comic revelation.

Howie Dornick's dingy abode is the only house in Tuttwyler, Ohio, not painted "soapy white." When pressed to conform by librarian Katherine Hardihood, he mixes second-hand yellow and blue paints with flammable liquids and slathers his home, making it Tuttwyler's first truly *green* building. Hugh Harbinger, famous color consultant, exclaims, "Oh, Momma!" and proceeds to make Serendipity Green the darling of every designer's palette, giving politically malevolent D. William Aitchbone a bone to pick with antihero Howie.

Levandoski assigns these characters a gaggle of actual and alliterative "h" names as eccentric as any in an Annie Proulx novel — interviews reveal him as a fan of *The Shipping News* — but he doesn't color in their personalities.

Each entity is allotted approximately one adjective for the duration of the story. Historic homes on millionaire's row are "soapy white." Everyone who is physically attractive is "appetizing." Everyone physically unattractive is "unappetizing." Howie and Katherine are unappetizing together. They also "copulate," a singularly unappetizing verb used throughout the book.

Gosh, does this intentional dearth of terminology herald a sophisticated comic style in which the repetition of language hilariously reinforces the repetition of everyday life? Or is Levandoski simply too danged lazy to stretch for another word? Who cares? The copulation between typos and stingy language reads as sloppy, not funny, and keeps the reader so distanced from the characters that it is difficult to laugh at them or with them, or to engage with the story without feeling taken in. Katherine and Howie are parodied so flatly that their eventual humanity and tenderness leaves the reader confused.

The lone juicy character is Dr. Pirooz Aram, the Persian psychiatrist who shrinks everyone in town. He sings, smiles, quotes Rumi, and possesses more than one adjective to his name. Pirooz appears to be a fully fleshed visitor from another, funnier, richer story. Levandoski unfortunately needs the doctor as much as any of the characters do, to add substance and heart to an otherwise tepid book.

This parody of American aesthetic values inadvertently skewers itself: is this American taste, that we are willing to accept slipshod craftsmanship, cardboard characters, and crude parody as stylish comic entertainment?

Julianna Waggoner is the marketing director for Dietz & Company Architects, Inc. in Springfield, Massachusetts.

The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities
by Richard L. Bushman

Vintage, 1993

Reviewed by
Elizabeth Padjen FAIA

OK, maybe your bookshelves aren't stuffed with volumes about "refinement." But if you're fascinated by the all-too-rare genre of books that offer elegant explanations of seemingly unconnected phenomena, then *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* belongs in your library.

Written by Richard Bushman, a history professor at Columbia, *Refinement* grew out of his effort to understand the sudden change in the lifestyle of early Americans who in only 30 years moved from dark, medieval, two-room dwellings in which they ate with their fingers to airy Georgian mansions in which they served tea from silver services.

The change that drew colonial America out of the darkness of the 17th century was the introduction of the culture of gentility, which Bushman describes as an intellectual, aesthetic, and social movement that had its roots in 16th-century Italian courts before spreading to France and England. A complex system of behaviors and tastes, gentility in this country combined with other forces such as emerging republicanism and the need for social structure to form a common culture that reached across economic strata. The lifestyles of the English rich and famous ultimately provided the foundations for the growth of the American middle class.

With the introduction of gentility, Americans learned to manipulate their physical environment in order to express their status, their houses becoming as rich with connotations about their personal aspirations as are college and prep-school bumperstickers on SUVs today. Their fervor to transform their environment extended beyond individual structures. Urban neighborhoods and even entire cities such as Charleston, Philadelphia, and New Haven were designed to reflect the order and beauty that characterized genteel culture.

Genteel culture might have become a brief aristocratic anomaly in a budding democracy, except for two essential characteristics: gentility was spread by emulation, and wealth was not required. Refined behavior and intellectual improvement cost little, and even those of limited means could acquire some material symbols of genteel tastes. By the early 19th century, the culture of refinement had spread to poorer rural areas, where New Englanders painted their houses white, and occasionally even realigned their town greens, in order to provide the outward beauty that they had come to associate with inward grace. Gentility brought economic stability, creating a consumer appetite for goods in the new industrial era. Soon, signs of gentility could be found everywhere — across geographical boundaries, across classes, and even across races.

The shock of Bushman's fine, immensely readable book, is that so much of what he describes is so familiar — not only in historic artifacts but also in behaviors and tastes that still characterize the modern middle class. Still, gentility is only a puddle in today's turbulent cultural landscape. Nowadays, the notion that every change in the built environment is an opportunity to express a common cultural ideal, to achieve an even greater level of beauty and refinement, seems downright radical.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

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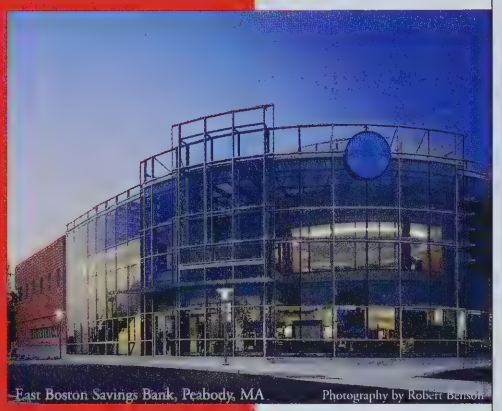

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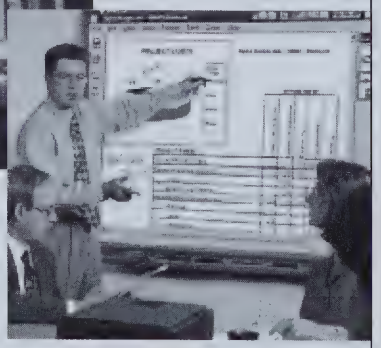

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Site Work

Web sites of note

Inequality.org

www.inequality.org

Almost everything you ever wanted to know about the stratification of income, wealth, and health in the United States today. The name may sound strident, but the site is fascinating.

The Center for a New American Dream

www.newdream.org

The Center for a New American Dream helps Americans consume responsibly, to avoid their obsession with "more." As the Center notes: "What does this 'more is better' version of the American dream leave in its wake? Less contentment and less free time." The Center assumes you still have enough free time to visit the site.

MassINC.

www.massinc.org

The Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth is a nonpartisan organization that promotes the growth and vitality of the middle class; it's also the publisher of the highly respected *CommonWealth* magazine.

Citizens' Housing and Planning Association

www.chapa.org

CHAPA is a non-profit umbrella organization that encourages the production and preservation of low-income housing in Massachusetts. The go-to site for reports and research on statewide housing issues.

Marshfield Action Inc.

www.marshfieldaction.com

Wondering what all the fuss over 40B is about? The good people of Marshfield will be glad to tell you. They may be angry, but they do have a sense of humor: check out the "40B Song," sung to the tune of "Let It Be."

The Affluenza Project

www.affluenza.com

"Simply defined, affluenza is a dysfunctional relationship with money/wealth, or the pursuit of it. Globally it is a back up in the flow of money resulting in a polarization of the classes and a loss of economic and emotional balance." The founder of this site is in a position to know: her grandfather was the president of General Motors.

Filoli

www.filoli.org

The official site of the house that was used as the Carrington mansion for the filming of *Dynasty*, the 1980s prime-time soap opera that revealed the secrets of the rich and the key to success: shoulderpads.

We're always looking for intriguing Web sites, however clueless the connection to architecture. Send your candidates to: epadjen@architects.org

Other Voices by Tom Congdon

The Nantucket Airport

photo: Bob Walsh, Nantucket Express

Once upon a time there was a low, fuzzy little island 30 miles out to sea off Cape Cod. It was peopled by a hardy band of Quakers who took pride in their modesty and had a knack for converting whale fat into money. It was not a place anyone ever went to for the fun of it, especially when the wind blew — and the wind blew a lot. When the whaling industry collapsed, the little island starved for a while, until pleasure-seeking outsiders discovered its beaches and pronounced it quaint.

Jump to the present. Nantucket has become hyper-popular. The very rich have decided they must build huge houses there. The average real-estate transaction is about $1.2 million. The rudest shack costs half a million and really showy places go for $10 million and up. The 1,200 acres occupied by the airport are worth about half a billion.

The Nantucket airport epitomizes boom-time Nantucket. The staid little once-Quaker community that until 1918 banned automobiles now boasts the second-busiest airport in Massachusetts after Logan, with runways long enough for Air Force One. The humble shed that had served as the terminal has been replaced by a swollen new structure trying to pass as a gray-shingled cottage. With its white, marble-like floors and its obsequious automatic doors, it represents commercial grandeur of a sort that many Nantucketers had hoped would never come to the island.

Like the airliners themselves, the horde that throngs the airport is divided into classes. First Class is the rich, both old and new. The significant difference between the two is not in their money but in their attitude toward simplicity.

The old rich were attracted to the island by its New England unobtrusiveness, the understatement and harmonious proportions of its 18th- and early 19th-century structures, its resistance to change. The new rich like this atmosphere too, but once they pay their millions for an unchanged house, they set about changing it. "It just isn't me," they tell the architects and decorators they bring up from the city. So the beautiful old interiors are gutted and massive kitchens and media rooms are created. The town's Historic District Commission struggles to keep the noble exteriors from being Aspenized, but no one has authority over the interiors. Behind the serene façades, visual depravity runs amok.

At the airport, the contrasting attitudes become visible. The old rich wear clothing; the new rich wear "outfits" and have knock-'em-dead luggage. The old rich are so eager not to call attention to themselves that they murmur instead of speak, whereas the new rich tend to broadcast their presence and to chew out the clerks behind the check-in counters. When the new rich greet house-guests at the gate, they seem to be playing a role, actors in a miniseries scripted by Ralph Lauren. They seem nervous as hell. It's an old, old story, but not to worry — it will all come right in the next generation.

Economy Class is the people with worrisome credit-card balances who, whether summer residents or year-rounders, are trying to stay alive financially in a very expensive place.

The Proletarian Class has been created by contractors putting up the zillion-dollar homes of the new rich. Faced with the problem of finding labor on an island where working people can't afford to live, they hire workmen on the mainland and fly them in and out every day. At dusk, dozens of tired, homeward-bound carpenters and plumbers and roofers in soiled work-clothes — their tools hanging like weapons from their wide, studded belts — mingle unapologetically among the clusters of elegant richies waiting for their flights to be called.

And then there is Supra Class. These travelers are the avatars of corporate America, the Jack Welches and Dennis Koslowskis and Roger Penskes, who can thrive on the thin air at the highest pinnacles but come down to sea level now and then for a little R&R. Their private jets scream in over the shingled roof-tops, fracturing the tranquility of earlier-arriving moguls who ask only for the chance to have a peaceful martini by their rimless swimming pools.

The Supras have their own terminal. Their sky chariots stand in long, gleaming rows, an impressive display for the benefit of the folks arriving in the oil-spattered, rackety, nine-seat turboprops of the local airlines. The security in the Supra terminal is unusually strong — not to foil terrorists but to fend off gawkers and the importunate.

Scientists warn that in about 600 years, the Atlantic Ocean will have washed the island away. All the pricey real estate and all the attendant fantasies will be slurped down into a realm where what counts is not how wealthy you are, but how well you swim. Going, going, Nantucket gone. ■■■

Tom Congdon is a writer and book editor. He lives on Nanctucket year-round.

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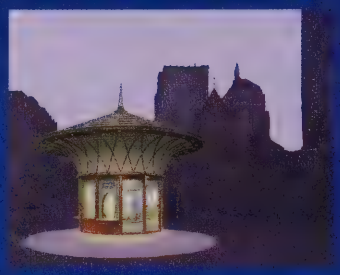

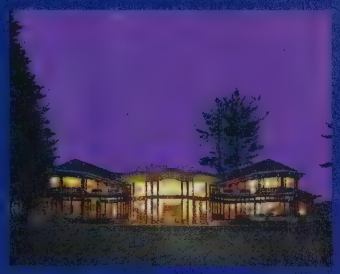

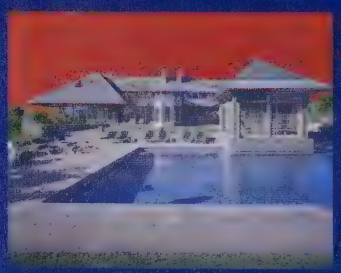

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ArchitectureBoston

July/August 2003

Peabody Terrace

An entire magazine issue devoted to a 40-year-old building? Before you hasten to assume that after five years of publication, *ArchitectureBoston* has been relaunched as a history journal, consider this: *The Boston Globe* recently reported that a Cambridge neighborhood overturned a proposal for a new Harvard art museum because residents have still not forgiven the university for the intrusion of the high-rise Peabody Terrace student apartments, which opened *in 1964*.

Astonished? So was the editorial board of *ArchitectureBoston*, which met the morning the story ran in the *Globe*. By all accounts, the proposed museum, designed by architect Renzo Piano, would have been an elegant, small-scale structure; the site, a former garden shop and greenhouse on the banks of the Charles River, seemed an appropriate choice. But the neighborhood, which even now sprouts signs protesting Harvard's latest building incursions, is undeniably bitter. And it is undeniably far better organized than it was 40 years ago.

This episode could be dismissed as yet another example of town-gown friction, or perhaps as a New England version of ancient tribal enmity and spite. But the real story of Peabody Terrace is the story of good intentions gone awry, of misunderstandings, of cultural conflict. Above all, it is an allegory of the schism between architects and the public. Architects love Peabody Terrace. The public hates it.

Designed by Josep Lluís Sert, Peabody Terrace is a Modernist icon. Its great irony is that it is also a terrific case study in Postmodern theory. Was there ever a better example of architectural relativism? It is a building that is at once beautiful and ugly — not in the "so bad it's good" sense, nor in the French sense of the *jolie laide*, of beauty derived from quirky ugliness. Architects believe Peabody Terrace is beautiful. The public believes it is ugly. They are both right.

Peabody Terrace is a product of the '60s, when Cambridge was an architectural Camelot of high energy, idealism, and creativity. It is an era now on the cusp of rediscovery, as the revivalist engine, having lingered long enough on the 1940s and '50s, seems ready to move on in its inevitable fashion. Exhibit 1: The Harvard Design School's upcoming exhibition and symposium, "Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953–1969."

But there are other reasons to devote an entire issue of a magazine to Peabody Terrace. The maelstrom that has surrounded Peabody Terrace also threatens new buildings. Harvard University has tried to avoid the obvious comparison to its latest high-rise riverfront housing project, One Western Avenue — surely a misplaced fear, as One Western would be lucky (and unfortunately, seems unlikely) to earn equivalent affection from architects. Other area universities, faced with high housing costs, are building dormitories, sometimes in existing neighborhoods. As MIT professor Larry Vale notes, the need for sensitivity to "design politics" may be at an all-time high. But something else is also at an all-time high in Boston: a yearning for the invention, clarity, and social spirit that made Peabody Terrace a landmark in American architecture.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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Cover: detail of Peabody Terrace, Cambridge, Massachusetts; photo courtesy of the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University

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Letters

I graduated from The Cooper Union with a BArch 31 years ago. In all this time I have never been mentioned in the alumni newsletter until the current issue, when I was mentioned for having published an article in *ArchitectureBoston* ["Architecture and the Pro-Forma," Summer 2002]. The pen is clearly mightier than the pencil.

Willy Sclarsic AIA, Senior Vice President
Wingate Development Corp.
Needham, Massachusetts

"Land" is another great issue [March/April 2003] that clearly shows just how open-minded *ArchitectureBoston* is. Landscape architecture is a topic that many architects and students certainly need to be more cognizant of. You bravely included articles that criticize architects (justly so!) for not recognizing the importance of landscape architecture, and you juxtaposed articles by American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) members with stories from landscape architects who are not ASLA-affiliated. In the theory of architecture course that I teach at Wentworth Institute of Technology, I have invited a National Park Service ranger from Frederick Law Olmsted's National Historical Site in Brookline to talk about Olmsted's Boston legacy. I have also used Olmsted's Back Bay Fens as an assignment study. This assignment, in particular, was an eye-opener for students who never thought that architecture went beyond the footprint of the building, let alone had a social conscious. Olmsted's aesthetic, social, and forward-thinking ideas left an impression on them. Of all my assignments, this one has brought the most inspiration to students for their later architecture projects. This from the non-architect, Frederick Law Olmsted.

Richard Moore AIA
Brookline, Massachusetts

Your "Class" issue [May/June 2003] was by far the very best, both informative and entertaining. It was a study in sociology as well as architecture, and shows just how related our industry is to so many others. I'm going to look for several of the books reviewed in the "Books" section. Keep up the good work; your magazine is a true reflection of the high standards of our field.

Diana Rubino,
Vice President/Director of Marketing
CostPro, Inc.,
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Ted Landsmark's "Class Dismissed" [May/June 2003] presents thoughts that are sobering but, regrettably, not new. I remember that about 40 years ago the US Department of Justice accused the architecture profession of deliberately keeping women out of the profession. This allegation was based on the claim that the percentage of registered women architects was lower than that of lawyers, doctors, and engineers. The profession responded with attempts to correct the situation, but if the 11 percent figure mentioned in this article is accurate, we haven't made much headway.

I am pleased that in my former firm, Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott, the chairman of the board is female. There are several women architects in responsible positions, one principal is African-American, and one is female. I hope, however, that the firm will not rest on its laurels in this respect.

The Boston firm of Stull and Lee is doing well, and Robert Coles FAIA, an African-American former staff member from our firm won the Rotch Scholarship and established a successful practice in Buffalo. It can be done, but I'm sure it isn't easy. It wasn't so long ago that Irish-American architects experienced discrimination, and firms such as Maginnis Walsh & Kennedy found success through work for the Catholic Church. Perhaps today's minorities can find similar paths to acceptance. One deterrent for minorities thinking of joining the profession may be the low level of fees and resulting underpayment of staff. I would think that other more lucrative occupations would be far more attractive.

Ted Landmark's ideas of how to improve this situation are a start, but I think the AIA will have to handle the implementation.

Hugh Shepley FAIA
Manchester, Massachusetts

Reading Ted Landsmark's article, "Class Dismissed" [May/June 2003], I recalled a meeting recently at the Boston Architectural Center where, as a volunteer thesis advisor to a graduating student, I met the Thesis Review Committee and the students preparing for the thesis studio.

Of the dozen or so reviewers, none was female, the average age was 55, they were nearly all white, and they all wore the black suit of the academic male architect. It was exactly the stereotype of "erudite males with good breeding" that Mr. Landsmark refers to. Differences in class, education, color, gender, age (and power) all hovered above the long black table that divided the reviewers from the students. When we broke into smaller groups, these divisions grew more apparent as the reviewers struggled to relate to the thesis topics, trying to coax them into an academic format that often blatantly missed the student's point. How can Mr. Landsmark say that "most of our design schools are startlingly complacent in their efforts to diversify their faculties and student bodies?" Is he complacent? As the black president of the largest architecture program in New England, he must have invaluable knowledge about why, even with the best intentions, diversifying and declassifying academia is so difficult. Had he shared his own struggles and his observations of the struggles of others, we might have learned where the specific weaknesses in the system can be found. Where has he encountered resistance? Is it the tenure system, accreditation requirements, faculty pool, the terrible hours or the dismal pay? What new educational and professional models has the BAC itself tried?

The question is not, "do we discriminate?" — *we do* — or even "why do we discriminate?" The questions that will produce change are *how* do we discriminate and *how* can we stop.

Tamara Roy AIA, Senior Project Designer
Elkus-Manfredi Architects
Boston

Attracting more African-Americans to the profession of architecture is more than a matter of class. Aside from talent and motivation and even the opportunity to gain the requisite professional education, the aspiring African-American architect must secure an apprenticeship and later, of course, clients willing and able to afford his or her services. Today, the problem for the African-American seeking a professional education is not usually one of securing acceptance into graduate school, but for the architect, the critical problem is getting the necessary apprenticeship. What established firm will take him or her? Occasionally, white firms for reasons of humanity or sensing outstanding ability will accept a black architect into the firm. This was the case when Horace Trumbauer employed Julian F. Abele on the design of Harvard's Widener Library. Abele, the first black graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture, also designed the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and several buildings on the campus of Duke University. The Abele story, regrettably, is unusual. Pioneering African-American architects started their own firms — the McKissaks in Alabama, the Cassells in Washington, DC, and Paul Williams in Los Angeles. These were the stars, but for the most part, these architects had to depend on designing black churches or black institutions of higher education.

To change this picture, white firms must be willing to have African-American architects in their firms who are accepted on the basis of their talent and education. Also, African-American firms must aggressively move into the mainstream and find ways of attracting clients from the corporate world and individuals of means, both black and white.

Adelaide M. Cromwell
Brookline, Massachusetts

Your roundtable discussion ["Life After 40B," May/June 2003] reminds me of a line from Charles Euchner's report *Getting Home*: "Whatever the respective merits of the Chapter 40B law, it has sucked the oxygen out of the housing debate. Rather than seriously considering other approaches to the housing crisis, state and local officials are locked in a bitter battle over 40B."

Chapter 40B is not the disease; it is the symptom of the disease. Other symptoms are our alarming national rankings: 47th in building permits per capita; 45th in home-ownership ratios; 2nd highest national median price. Massachusetts historically participated in 2 percent of all housing starts nationwide. We are now participating in 1 percent of building starts nationwide — a 50 percent decline in market share. Our competitive edge for businesses and employees is being undermined by the high cost of housing and will eventually choke our economic engine.

Well-intentioned local land use regulations are the disease. When looked at collectively, these regulations are choking the supply of housing. Examples in Eastern Massachusetts include: 50 communities that limit the number of residential building permits on an annual basis; 130 communities that override the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with more restrictive wetland by-laws; 100 communities that override the DEP with more restrictive Title 5 regulations; "out-zoning" of most multi-family housing; "in-zoning" of housing without children. We need a law that affirms communities' responsibility to the "common wealth." Communities should plan and zone for housing (of all types) that is proportionate to our growth rate. With that kind of mandate, plans will get enacted that promote our uniqueness and grow our housing supply. It is high time to stop treating the problem with aspirin. With our current land-use regulations, will your children be able to afford the house they grew up in?

Kevin Sweeney, President
Home Builders Association of Massachusetts
Boston

I commend *ArchitectureBoston* for its insightful and informative article devoted to examining Chapter 40B ["Life After 40B," May/June 2003], the Commonwealth's comprehensive permit law.

In keeping with his assertion to double housing starts in Massachusetts, Governor Romney has stated that he will not agree to new 40B reforms which serve to hinder the production of affordable housing. Preserving the intent of the statute will increase the state's affordable and market-rate housing supply, and that is a key initiative of the Romney administration.

While the law has created more than 30,000 affordable homes since its inception more than 33 years ago, it is well recognized that Chapter 40B could be improved to balance the need for affordable housing with legitimate community concerns including infrastructure, environmental, public health, and safety issues. That is why the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has made more than 15 regulatory changes to the law since August 2001. And that is why the Governor recently established a 24-member task force to assess the effectiveness of the law and its impact on communities. In May, this task force delivered a report of its findings to the Governor that provided him, as well as the Legislature, with guidance on how best to increase the supply of housing and stabilize the state's economy while employing efficient land-use planning and addressing local concerns.

Jane Wallis Gumble, Director
Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
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You can continue the *ArchitectureBoston* dialogue. Letters may be sent to epadjen@architects.org or *ArchitectureBoston*, 52 Broad St., Boston, MA 02109.

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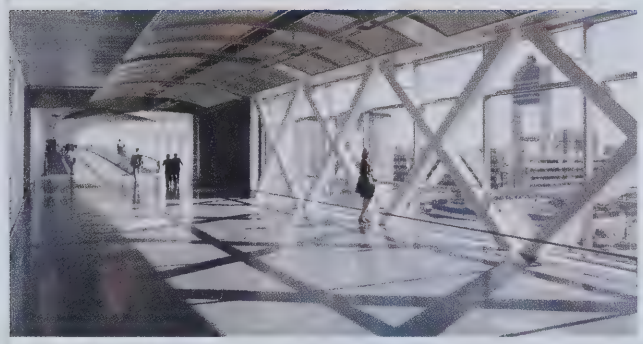

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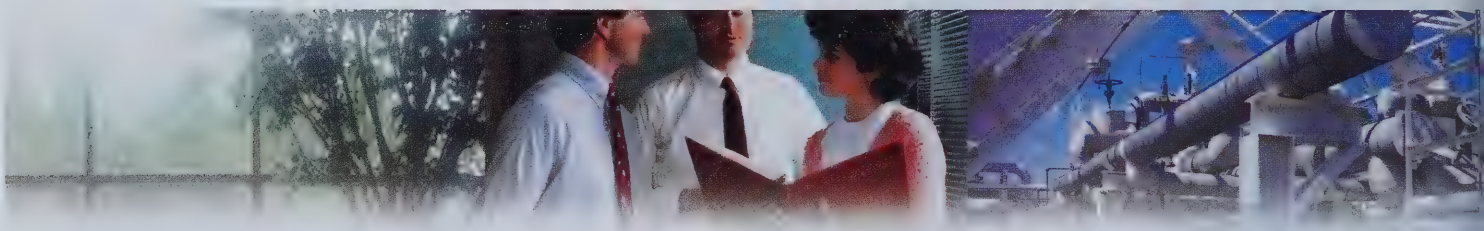

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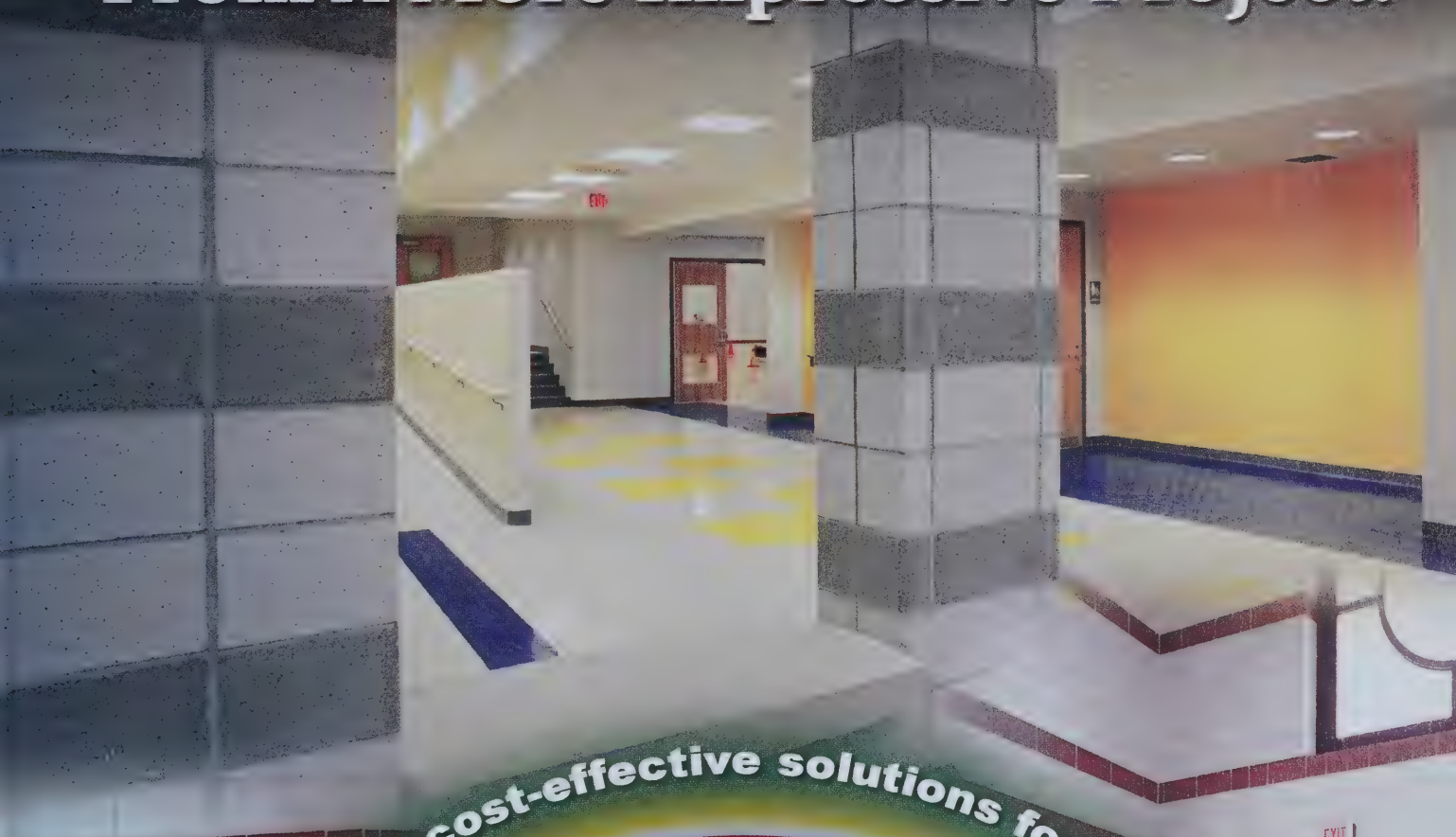

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Talking About a Revolution: Cambridge in the '60s

PARTICIPANTS:

Norman Fletcher FAIA co-founded The Architects Collaborative (TAC) in 1945, where he remained as principal until the closing of the firm in 1995. He went on to establish Fletcher Harkness Cohen Moneyhun in Boston. TAC's projects include the Harvard Graduate Center, Parkside Elementary School, Six Moon Hill, the AIA headquarters, and the IBM administrative center.

John C. "Chip" Harkness FAIA co-founded The Architects Collaborative (TAC) in 1945, where he remained as principal until the closing of the firm in 1995. He went on to establish Fletcher Harkness Cohen Moneyhun in Boston. TAC's projects include the Josiah Quincy School, Children's Hospital, Clark University Art Museum, and the University of Baghdad.

Huson Jackson FAIA co-founded Sert, Jackson and Gourley, later Sert Jackson and Associates, in 1958, where he remained until closing the firm in 1995. The firm's significant projects include Harvard's Holyoke Center and Undergraduate Science Center, Boston University central campus buildings, and housing and community developments on Roosevelt Island, New York.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

G.W. Terry Rankine FAIA co-founded Cambridge Seven Associates (C7A) in 1962, where he remained as a principal for 30 years. C7A's projects include the US Pavilion at Expo '67, the New England Aquarium, design guidelines for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the Submarine Service and Nautilus Memorial in Groton, Connecticut, and Smith College Library additions.

Tad Stahl FAIA founded Stahl Associates in 1961, which in 1999 merged with Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates, where he is now executive architect. His projects include State Street Bank Building, 70 Federal Street, the Park Street Church Ministries Building, and the historic rehabilitation of Old South Meeting House.

Mary Otis Stevens AIA was a partner in Thomas McNulty Architects and a founder of iPress, established in 1969 in association with the publisher George Braziller. In 1975, she founded Design Guild, a multi-disciplinary firm with a focus on sustainability and preservation by re-use. Her projects include "the Lincoln house" (one of three concrete houses) and a music theater for the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts in Vienna, Virginia. Since 1992, she has been a music composer.

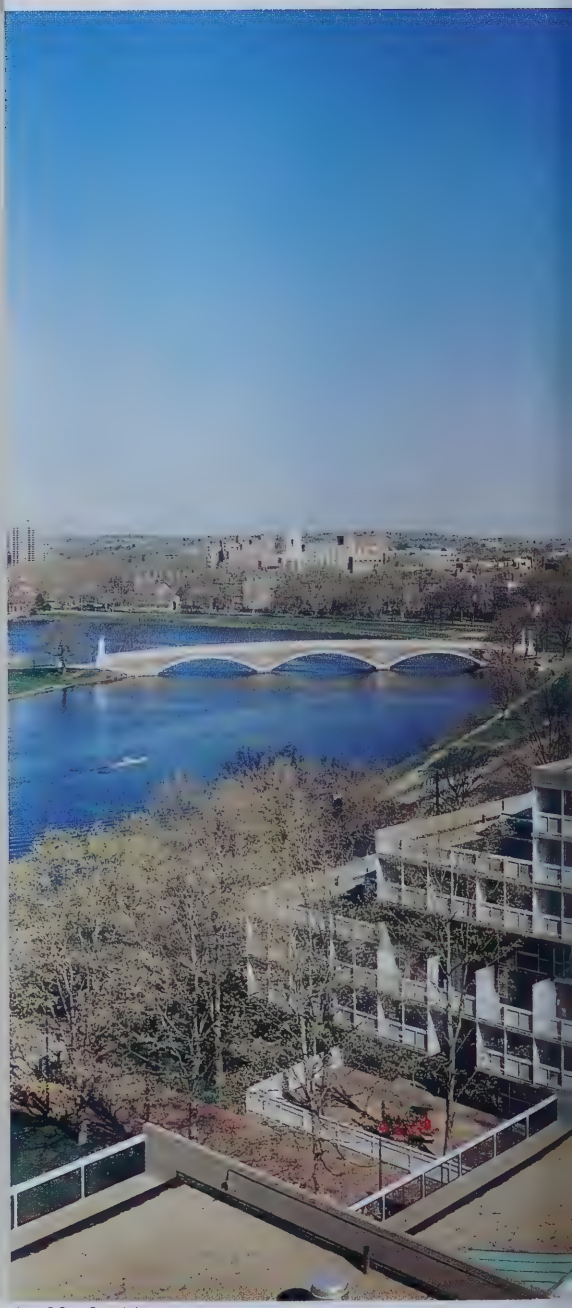

photo: © Steve Rosenthal

Below:
Peabody Terrace
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Architect:
Sert Jackson Associates

Right, top:
Holyoke Center
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Architect:
Sert Jackson Associates

Right, bottom:
Clark University Art Museum
Worcester, Massachusetts

Architect:
The Architects Collaborative

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Peabody Terrace is a landmark of what we might call the "golden age" of architecture in Cambridge — loosely, the post-war period up through the 1960s and early '70s. You were all leaders in the architectural community at that time — I think you all started to hit your stride in the 1960s. Let's talk about the reactions to Peabody Terrace — what do you remember about the controversy surrounding the building? What did it mean for architecture in Cambridge?

TERRY RANKINE: I don't think I knew an architect in Cambridge who did not like Peabody Terrace and what it represented. It said a lot about what we were all aiming for at that particular point in time. There was no doubt that Peabody Terrace was going in a direction that was quite different from so many other things.

NORMAN FLETCHER: I was very taken with the construction technology of Peabody Terrace. The engineer was Othar Zaldastani — one of the great engineers in Boston. But I also remember admiring the cleverness of Sert's design — the way it worked in section [the vertical relationship of spaces and elements], the way the skip-stop elevator worked, and the way he integrated the low-rise blocks with the towers.

TAD STAHL: This was the period when the doors opened to what I think of as heroic Modern architecture — what we all tried to stand for and tried to work toward. Peabody Terrace was a strong emblem of that.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: It *was* a strong emblem — and that might have been part of the reason for the controversy. Having known Josep Lluís Sert as a colleague and as a friend, I would say that his thinking was way ahead of most people anywhere at that time. He was definitely European; he was also very urban. He designed a social

photo: © Steve Rosentha

photo: © Steve Rosenthal

community for Peabody Terrace, and the people living there represented many different cultures and countries, even different ages. But they met in these communal settings — the childcare center, the plaza, the street-like walkways. It didn't follow the rules of other conventional high-rise housing projects, which were almost like vertical gated communities. Peabody Terrace was not gated. I think that may have caused some of the difficulties with the neighbors because, suddenly, this whole other way of life was presented to them. It was revolutionary on many scales. And Josep Lluís knew it. I think he thought it would be a progressive thing for the community, that it would have a positive social impact, and that neighbors would come to approve of it. But that didn't happen.

HUSON JACKSON: I don't know to what extent there was thinking about a real interrelation between the community and the inhabitants of the student housing. But I can tell you about some of the other things that were considered at that time. Peabody Terrace was previously the site of a factory, which was fairly typical of development along the river. Back then, riverfronts weren't used much for residential or recreational purposes — they were considered wasteland and were developed for industry and commerce. At the same time, we were aware that people from the community did want to reach the river, so the design included an important connection to the Charles. There were discussions of this with community members. I can't remember any significant objections or input that came from those discussions. The thrust of the design was to develop the site — land being a precious commodity in Cambridge — to the extent we considered appropriate. If the local community expected two- and three-story houses like the ones that were already there, it didn't articulate that. We did try to keep the scale along Putnam Avenue in accordance with the existing scale of the houses and to keep the taller buildings toward the river — an open space that had enough breathing room around it. Those are design considerations that may not be particularly appreciated by the laity, but they were intended to avoid an impact on the residents along Putnam Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods.

TAD STAHL: I recently walked around Peabody Terrace in the rain. I was struck by how the scale had been handled very successfully relative to the neighborhood, and how well the pedestrian area worked. A large area is automobile-free. Apart from the geometries, the colors, the rhythms, I was looking for aspects of the project which might turn people off. I learned that some things are definitely worse in the rain. The smooth, concrete walls can be pretty oppressive when they are rain-soaked, especially because they lack punctuation or scale elements or texture. The other façades — the ones with the balconies and the rhythms and colors — are very successful.

TERRY RANKINE: The community believed that Harvard was building a wall between the residents and the river. That seemed to come up over and over again. Sert, however, talked about clusters of high-rises — the Harvard cluster, the Boston University cluster, the MIT cluster — as a progression up the river. Buildings as incidents, but never as a continuous barrier.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: Kevin Lynch, who was teaching at MIT, had an influence on that discussion, too, with his development of the high-spine concept — a line of high-rise buildings in Boston. But Kevin also understood that Boston was a city of neighborhoods, so the question became, how do you link the neighborhoods? And one answer was to use the river to link them and to build in clusters. Peabody Terrace fits into that greater scheme. I know Josep Lluís was aware of this; he talked about it. He wasn't doing something arbitrary. This was an era when architects worked together really well — a collegial feeling existed in the '60s, and I think still exists in Boston.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: I wonder if tall buildings were considered a novelty in the Boston area at that time. Think of the long mid-century period when Boston really didn't build much of anything. Then the Prudential tower came along in the late 1950s, followed by Peabody Terrace and the State Street Bank building, which were finished around the same time.

TAD STAHL: Substantial completion of the State Street Bank building, one of my firm's projects, was between '64 and '66, so we were a little bit behind Peabody Terrace. Our clients were from Britain. They didn't have any prejudice against high buildings or high density. And they had a good laugh when they were told that everybody in Boston thought the center of the city, the financial core, was going to move toward the Prudential. They were extraordinary clients and I don't think I've had another like them. They said, "You're the local architect, you know what a Boston building should be. Why don't you go to work and when you've got a scheme together, give us a call and we'll come see what you've done? How could we, coming from London and Birmingham, tell you what's appropriate for your city?"

MARY OTIS STEVENS: I think that Harvard served as a similar kind of client for Sert. Sert was very close to Harvard's president, Nathan Pusey, which meant he had somebody who was going to back him all the way.

CHIP HARKNESS: The whole question of how a building fits into the context of the community is very tricky. I think Peabody Terrace is a great project. One of the things that we architects struggle with is how to make buildings that are comfortable and respond to the culture and the traditions around them. Our firm did enough buildings for Harvard that I know the reaction of Harvard people to building materials, for

Facing page, top:
State Street Bank
Boston

Architect:
Stahl Associates

Bottom:
New England Aquarium and plaza
Boston

Architect:
Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc.

example. They much prefer red brick. The Graduate Center that Gropius designed for the Law School was brick, but it was a smooth, buff-colored brick and I think was not as well-liked for that reason. But the whole question of how the architecture fits into the environment is certainly a very key one. The design of Peabody Terrace grew from the concept that we were now living in an industrial age. The building materials are industrial, and the building has an industrial quality to it. And that is one of the great things about it.

TAD STAHL: Harvard, for many years, had very carefully worked its way along the river in the Georgian Revival style, and then, all of a sudden, with Peabody Terrace, there was a complete break. That was a shock, and I think still is a shock to the conventional view.

NORMAN FLETCHER: Chip's mention of the Graduate Center brings up another point that's worth mentioning. That project was a break-through — a piece of Modern architecture where Gropius didn't pull any punches and did what he thought was right. At the same time — this was around 1949 — there was a another wonderful project being built by MIT: 100 Memorial Drive by Rapson and Koch and their colleagues. A beautiful building, with Le Corbusier's skip-stop elevators, which were considered quite innovative. And, of course, there was Aalto's Baker House at MIT. These projects were shakers in the sense of signaling a very early acceptance by MIT and Harvard of Modern architecture. In other words, those stuffy boards of trustees were accepting great pieces of architecture.

TAD STAHL: That also underscores Chip's point about red brick. Both of those early MIT buildings are red-brick buildings. You can do just about anything around here if it's red brick.

TERRY RANKINE: You mean from the point of view of the community?

TAD STAHL: Yes. It is so depressing sometimes. We've had 20 years of serious efforts in Boston to rebuild the city and it is drained of any vigor and insight. It is all red brick and traditional hole-in-the-wall windows and trim. Even if it isn't overtly historicist, it still looks pedestrian.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: Exactly. But just think, Josep Lluís not only got Harvard to build two very urban, very radical buildings — I'm thinking also of Holyoke Center — but he also got Le Corbusier's only building in America. He persuaded Pusey to put up with Le Corbusier, who didn't like America and was very difficult. Le Corbusier's famous comment when somebody asked his advice on the old brick Faculty Club at Harvard was, "Tear it down."

TERRY RANKINE: Peabody Terrace was a perfect example of a designer trying to come to grips with a new building and its relationship to the environment. I think we all feel that our buildings fit into the environment reasonably well. But it is quite different to talk about a building's relationship to the community. Peabody Terrace is high density, but you're not aware of that when you are walking around it — one of its strong points. But for some reason the neighborhood was stirred up. Let's be critical, just for a minute. Not about Peabody Terrace, but about us as architects. We get so incestuous at times. We only listen to each other. We love getting accolades from each other and we give each other awards and we all get excited. Meanwhile, there is the community

photo: © Phokion Karas, courtesy Tad Stahl

photo: © Steve Rosenthal

saying, "We think this is ugly!" How is it that we as architects are so sure something is good, and the people we are building for are not with us on it? I've come to the conclusion that it is because we build for each other to a far greater extent than we build for the people who are going to occupy our buildings.

HUSON JACKSON: But at the same time — going back to Tad's comment about the banality of recent buildings in Boston — does anybody here want to cite a case where heavy community input has made the design better? I think it's hard to find.

CHIP HARKNESS: When we go to foreign countries, we are for some reason much more ready to try to get a sense of the local architecture and to respond to the local culture. I look at the work that our office did, for instance, at the University of Baghdad, and it is certainly not something we would have designed for Harvard or Yale or Princeton. I once worked on a project in Tunisia, where the client insisted that I take a trip all through the country so I could understand the culture. Somehow, when we work in foreign countries we are much more willing to actively look for the culture than we are right here, where we think we know the culture and we don't pay attention to what other people think.

TAD STAHL: I agree that we are often anthropologically unsophisticated in this way, especially compared to some of the other players in our industry. We live in a market-driven era, and most developers have a very sophisticated idea of the market, in terms of the cultural wants and needs of different segments of the population. Residential developers especially — they think in terms of a much broader and much more elegantly detailed spectrum than architects do. Architects tend to think of the human figure in the abstract.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: To some degree, Peabody Terrace itself represents different cultural expectations for the students who live there. For example, Dolf Schnebli, the Swiss architect, loved living at Peabody Terrace while he taught at Harvard. He said that the Europeans and Asians who lived there also loved it, but the American graduate students had many more problems adjusting to the small units. Culture affects how you use the apartments: How do you store your possessions? How many possessions do you even own? Do you eat out? Eating out is much more European, so you don't need a big kitchen, and you don't need a big freezer, because you don't stock up. It's a different concept of living, and this is what Peabody Terrace is about. The interesting thing was the neighbors understood. They didn't like it, but they understood that it was different, and it was the difference that stuck out. It's no accident that Peabody Terrace turned out as it did. It was the natural cultural expression of a very sophisticated, urban architect whose friends included artists like Picasso and Miró.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: I think it's relevant to talk about Sert as a person and a personality. It seems to me that the personality of the author or the artist is evident in the work and at some level influences its interpretation. If you learned that Sert was arrogant and cold, you might develop one interpretation of Peabody Terrace. But if you knew that he was a warm, inventive, liberal-minded person, you would have another interpretation.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: He and his wife Moncha were very rare people who led a remarkable life. They were great hosts — very affectionate with everyone — and had enormous generosity. They lived an elegant life wherever they lived. And they had fun — an utter enjoyment of life. That's what I loved.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: What was the dynamic like in the office? How did Sert work with the other partners?

Huson Jackson on Josep Lluís Sert

José Luis Sert was born in 1902 to a wealthy and prominent Barcelona family. Castilian was spoken in his home, but Catalan, the popular language of his home city, which he told me he had learned in the streets, was his preferred language. And Catalan was the identity he preferred: in later years, he adopted the Catalan spelling of his name — Josep Lluís Sert.

His studies in Barcelona included painting as well as architecture, and he retained a keen interest in art throughout his life. The work and publications of Le Corbusier were a strong influence in Sert's early years, and in the 1920s, he worked in Le Corbusier's Paris studio and took part in the early meetings of CIAM, the International Congress of Modern Architecture, of which he later became president.

In 1930 he took part, along with other young architects, in the organization of GATCPAC, the Catalan Group of Architects and Technologists for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture. The socially responsible work of this group was soon interrupted when civil war broke out in 1936 against the Spanish Republic. Sert moved to Paris and there was responsible for designing the pavilion of the Spanish Republic at the 1937 International Exposition, where Picasso's "Guernica" was first shown. Following the defeat of the Republic in 1939, he and his wife Moncha decided to move to New York.

In New York, Sert established contacts with other expatriate intellectuals and artists and with kindred American spirits. He joined in the firm Town Planning Associates with Paul Lester Wiener and Paul Schulz. This office was responsible for major town planning and urban design projects in Latin America.

In 1953, he was invited to become dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He considered the administrative side of his deanship a burden; his work as teacher of architecture and urban design was the rewarding part. By agreement with the University, he reserved half his time for the practice of his profession. For the first five years, he maintained his practice with Town Planning Associates in New York, then decided to give up the long-distance commuting and to establish a practice in Cambridge more focused on architecture. He invited Ronald Gourley, Joseph Zalewski, and me (until then I had also maintained a New York office) to join him in the new firm.

The Serts' personal magnetism attracted a rich variety of friends, and among them were many university and museum people. But I believe they were most at home among creative people — artists and architects. In later years, they built a vacation house on the island of Ibiza and rekindled friendships with old friends and associates separated by the civil war. Sert is widely admired as a "culture hero" by Spanish architects and students.

He and Moncha were Mediterranean people with an ample love of life and good conversation. Their cosmopolitan grace and understanding made them at home in our more northern society and especially qualified to bring the richness of Mediterranean life to America.

HUSON JACKSON: I think we all recognized that he was the dominant talent, but he was very open to others. Josep Lluís was looking for ideas; he wasn't imposing ideas. It was a very rewarding working relationship. He was tremendously full of life, and it showed not only in the life he lived, but also in his ideas for design. Working on the apartments at Peabody Terrace, we were thinking of the design of the units in great detail. The ultimate issue was the life that was going to be lived there.

CHIP HARKNESS: I'm curious about the organization, the way the office worked. Did you have a system like the one at TAC, where someone was designated as the principal-in-charge of the job, and that person was the one who signed the documents and was really responsible for the design? Or was it more focused on Sert?

HUSON JACKSON: I think it was broadly consensual and collaborative, but Josep Lluís was the most powerful designer. He took the lead on every significant project.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: How many people were in the firm?

HUSON JACKSON: It varied. The largest number we had was about 60 when we were doing considerable work for the New York Urban Development Corporation. Normally it was smaller. We were probably 30 people at the time of Peabody Terrace.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: It's also important to know that Sert was a member of CIAM [International Congress of Modern Architecture], so he was working on the international exchange of ideas with other architects all of his life. For instance, he was a supporter of the United Nations Housing Bill of Rights, which would have set standards for living conditions. It was something the American building industry wouldn't go for, but I admired the fact that he would lend his name to it. He was very involved with social politics. Most American architects are afraid to open their mouths because they might lose a client.

CHIP HARKNESS: The great thing about this roundtable group is that now we don't have that problem.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Who would have been Sert's intellectual circle in this country? Given his European experience and connections, it almost sounds as though he might have been lonely here.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: You could put him in the middle of nowhere and he'd have a party going. He was so attractive, as was Moncha. They told me that when they arrived in New York, they used to eat at the Automat — near the Chelsea Hotel on 23rd Street. I couldn't imagine them doing it. But I bet they managed to have the most elegant dinners. Wherever they were, they had charm and they were magnets for other people. But I would say that Willo von Moltke was one of his closest friends and colleagues here. He pulled Willo in as head of the urban design program at Harvard.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: I tend to think of Cambridge during this period and the ten years or so afterward with a certain wistfulness, because it seems to me that architects at that time were doing good work *and* having fun. And I'm not sure that architects today are having fun, at least not in the way that you all probably did. Terry, you started this conversation by saying Peabody Terrace represented something to people who were working here at that time. Maybe you could talk a little bit about the spirit of that time.

TERRY RANKINE: I wouldn't have missed the '60s for anything. It was a gorgeous, wonderful time. And I'm not just talking about the demonstrations. There was a marvelous feeling, a feeling of freedom. Cambridge Seven started in '62, and two of the original seven were very much students of Sert. Our first project was the New England Aquarium in Boston, a rather sad building now. But when we started thinking about how you poured concrete and how you made shapes with concrete, a lot of what we did came from that spirit of liberation that was all around us. Architecture itself was undergoing a kind of liberation — in our case we wanted to be very sure that we weren't simply designing buildings, but that we were addressing other issues as well — graphics, exhibits, transportation. I like to think that Peabody Terrace reflected a determination to not be run-of the-mill, which was still a problem at that time. You have to remember that, in the '60s, high-rises were specified by developers. The architects were designing the curtain walls for them. Then along came Peabody Terrace, which was totally different.

CHIP HARKNESS: I agree that it was a time of great excitement — a feeling that we could do something and have a hell of a good time doing it, too. I recently happened to look back at *Process* magazine and found something I had written about the start of our office in 1945, right after the war: "This was a time of great hope and great expectations and we believed that the development of technology was at a point where it could be turned to the advantage of all people. With the war over, that potential could be put to peaceful use." I don't know if that's a great statement, but I think it does reflect the thinking that a lot of us had at that time, that carried forward into the 1960s. It was a time when we could really do something that was going to make things better and have a lot of fun going about it. It was a hell of a good feeling. I think if you look at what is going on now, it gets very discouraging.

Facing page, top:
Fletcher House
Six Moon Hill
Lexington, Massachusetts

Architect:
The Architects Collaborative

Bottom:
Lincoln House
Lincoln, Massachusetts

Architect:
Thomas McNulty Architects

TERRY RANKINE: There was no doubt about the social beliefs of that time. It was rather wonderful. If you read Peter Blake's book *Utopia*, you'll understand what I mean. We had absolutely no doubts about why we were architects or why we were city planners. I remember my old friend, Alden Christie, one of the founders of Cambridge Seven. He said that he could imagine Sert standing in the middle of the Charles after deciding on the main massing of Peabody Terrace and saying, "Some balconies there, none there," and so on. Making music out of it. There is something about Peabody Terrace — it's serious, straight, good stuff, but there is music there as well. There was a utopian side to what we were doing, but there was also delight.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: Well, it was certainly utopian. I started iPress, a small publishing house, that was based on European architecture publications — not monographs but idea books. For those of us who were in the international loop, it was a very heady time. Then when [my former husband and partner] Tom McNulty and I built our Lincoln house with no doors, we caused a big commotion, and that was fun. The kind of cement we used in the concrete mix was what they used in basements where it would typically be covered up. I loved it because it was chalky white, not gray. But this house was about using technology and about using new materials cheaply. Gehry did this later with chain-link fencing. But we thought, why build houses out of wood, why follow the same conventions? Because construction costs were lower then, people were more willing to take chances. And we had clients who were willing to take chances with us.

TAD STAHL: Looking back, I think it was a period in which we invented ourselves by talking to each other, weaving together a new architectural community, learning this new language of the International Style. All of this in what was a terribly provincial city. Terribly backwards, terribly narrow, terribly unsophisticated. We were lucky to get away with that stuff, in a way. I think there are more diverse opportunities for young architects today — stylistically, philosophically — than there were back then. Yet, somehow there was an opening — nobody was looking, and Pusey pulled the switch and the train went on a different track.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: I'd like to follow up on your comment about Boston being a provincial place at that time, which is undoubtedly true. You have all also talked about international influences on the architectural community. There are some very big differences between now and then. We had Le Corbusier doing his thing on Quincy Street, but generally speaking, there were fewer international celebrity architects. Where did new ideas come from? What were some of the influences? Was there a sense of being provincial? Or was Harvard Square considered one of the centers of the architectural universe?

TERRY RANKINE: Cambridge was a hotbed of architectural thinking.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: I think that Cambridge has always been open to new ideas. Harvard Square was a mecca. I still love Harvard Square, even though it's not a square and it's very ordinary in its architecture. But there is a vibrancy — every year there is a new feeling, a new generation coming along. One of the downsides of the educated community in this country is that it is incestuous. If you are part of the university, as were the Serts, you are part of a network. We all lived in our bubble. And this is what the problem of Peabody Terrace came down to. The people who were the Peabody Terrace abutters weren't part of that bubble. That tension exists to this day.

photo courtesy Norman Fletcher

photo courtesy Mary Otis Stevens

TAD STAHL: To some degree, the architectural influences varied with the schools. I spent a year at Harvard — Sert arrived as dean the year after I left — and two-and-a-half years at MIT, so I got a sense of both places. They had very different approaches. Harvard was very much in the Bauhaus tradition, which we considered to be the mainstream. MIT represented more diverse traditions, such as the work of Aalto and Rasmussen. It was not the International Style. The faculty there included people like Ralph Rapson, Bucky Fuller, and Paul Rudolph.

NORMAN FLETCHER: I wouldn't say there was a polemic at Harvard in terms of preaching Modern architecture or the International Style. Gropius ran the master's class, and once in a while he would give a little presentation on construction details, but not about the design or the students' work. He would criticize a student individually only if you wanted it, but he was very open-minded and very permissive, not at all dictatorial. The same was true after we founded our office. He liked to think of himself as the catfish in the boat — the fisherman brings his catch home at the end of the day with a lot of fish in the boat, and Gropius was the catfish that keeps them jumping around. That was his idea of what his role was.

CHIP HARKNESS: He was absolutely adamant about the International Style not being what Modern architecture was about. He wrote a great deal about that.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: The Boston architectural community is nationally known for its collegial culture — a spirit of collegiality, of intellectual generosity and, at the same time, of civic responsibility. My sneaking suspicion is that it came from the era we've been talking about or perhaps the half-generation before you. Would you agree?

CHIP HARKNESS: I think many of us had a shared sense of being part of a group that was making progress against the institutions that previously existed. The opposition was the old-fashioned architects, people my father's age. We were breaking ground, moving in a wonderful new direction. We all agreed with each other. We competed to get jobs, but we didn't hate each other. We were one group trying to accomplish things together.

HUSON JACKSON: I think we always had a strong collegial sense, a sense of broader purpose, of something more than just making a career and getting work. Architecture was a social undertaking, a contribution to the culture. I would attribute that attitude to Gropius. And it continued later, after Gropius had retired and Sert became dean. He brought in a parade of CIAM people. CIAM itself was very collegial.

MARY OTIS STEVENS: I agree that Gropius was behind much of it. He had co-founded the Bauhaus on the foundation of social responsibility. He brought that ethos to Cambridge, and the result was this burst of idealism, which was manifested in all sorts of wonderful ways. TAC's residential development at Six Moon Hill was as revolutionary in its way as was Peabody Terrace. I thrived on Serge Chermayeff's book, *Community and Privacy*. Those were the questions and issues of the time: What does privacy mean in a democracy? How does the individual relate to the greater good? What is democracy?

TERRY RANKINE: This wasn't a revolution that happened overnight. It took a long time. There were a lot of us who started our design education in the Beaux-Arts tradition. In my first few years in college, I drew columns and entablatures. When I came back from the war, the revolution had begun. The Beaux-Arts training I knew was gone, and it was all Bauhaus. It was an amazing contrast, pre-war and post-war. But the change led to a growing excitement. Peabody Terrace, Six Moon Hill, Five Fields — they were all products of that excitement. It was a heady time. I don't get the feeling that today is as heady as it was then. We were wrong about many things. It wasn't all perfect by any means. But it represented a great surge forward, and it was delightful to be carried by that tide. ■■■

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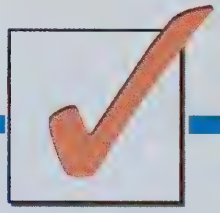

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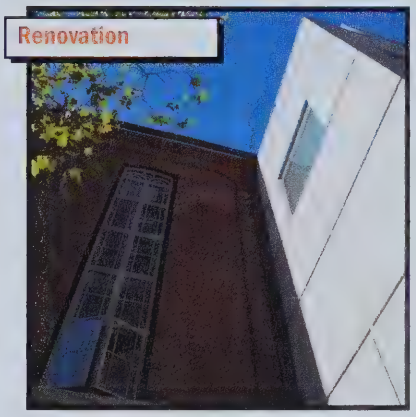

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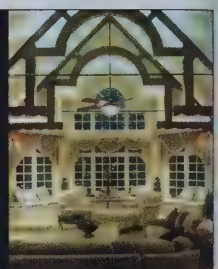

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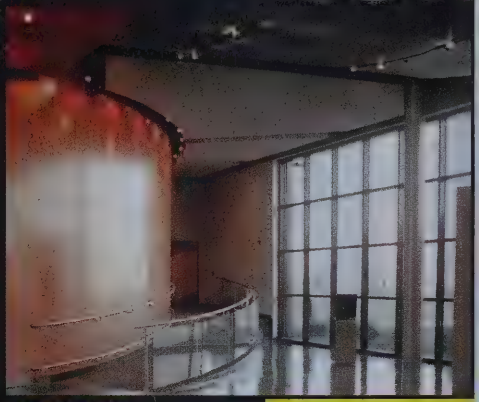

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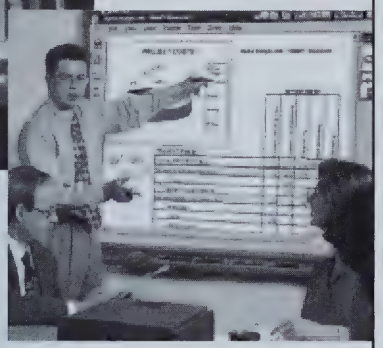

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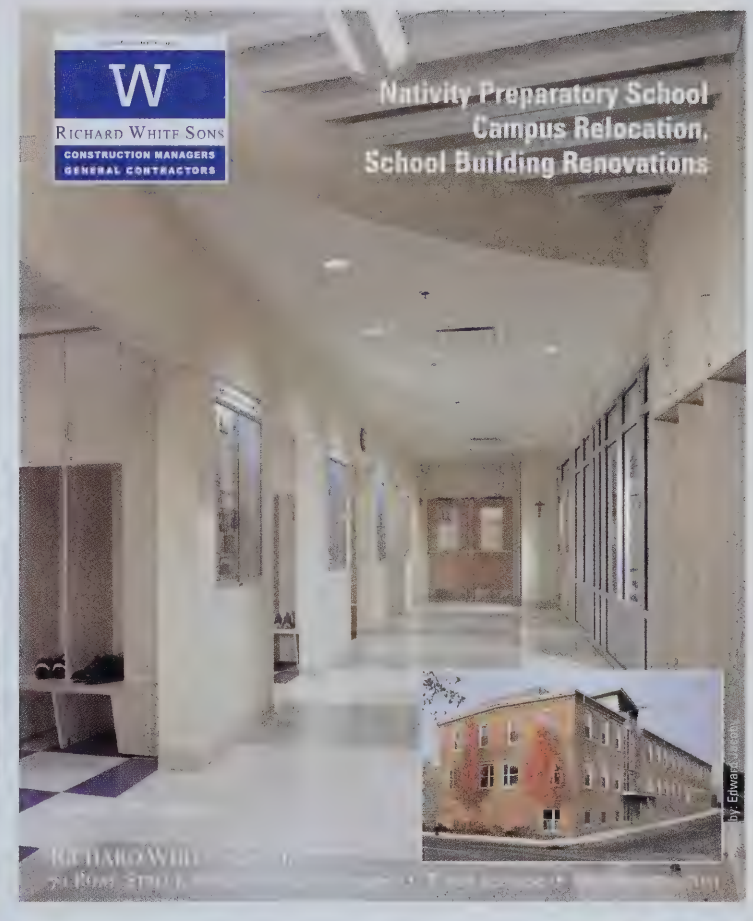

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Why Architects Love Peabody Terrace

by Lee Cott FAIA

photo: © Phokion Karas, courtesy Huson Jackson

Around Cambridge, you can't find an architect who dislikes Peabody Terrace…nor can you find anyone else who likes it. Is there another building or complex of buildings about which the opinions are so "set in concrete"? Even Boston City Hall — another local contender for the title of most reviled concrete Modernist building — has admirers who are not architects. Peabody Terrace was conceived and constructed 40 years ago, but the feelings, on both sides, still run deep — as if Peabody Terrace had been built just yesterday.

What do architects see in Peabody Terrace that everyone else has somehow missed? Why do architects love Peabody Terrace? The answers fit into two categories: they love the architecture, and they especially love the *idea* of Peabody Terrace.

As an alternative to the run-down and substandard housing available to graduate students in the early 1960s, Harvard president Nathan Marsh Pusey suggested the creation of new University-sponsored housing. Josep Lluís Sert, the dean of the Graduate School of Design, received the commission as construction neared completion on the first phase of his Holyoke Center project — the Harvard Square project that combined shops, offices, an infirmary, a parking garage, and a pedestrian arcade in an innovative design that took its cues from urban-design concerns. Working in conjunction with the Harvard Planning Office, Sert intended that his new housing would continue the site-planning tradition of Harvard's neo-Georgian River Houses, where clusters of dormitories oriented toward the Charles River fostered a sense a community focused on discrete open spaces. But Sert took that tradition further, subjecting it to the Modernist precepts that had guided Holyoke

Peabody Terrace
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Architect:
Sert Jackson and Associates

Above:
original site plan

Facing page:
view from across the
river, pintsch photo

Why Architects Love Peabody Terrace

Peabody Terrace vintage photos

Clockwise, from top left: residents on town-house rooftop; skybridge connecting two towers, apartment interior; and tower lobby

photos: © Phokion Karas, courtesy of the Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University

Peabody Terrace
Corridor floor plan
(floors 9, 12, 15, 18 similar)

Peabody Terrace
Non-corridor floor plan
(floors 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20 similar)

plans courtesy of the Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University

Center, and thus established that the new project would be part of the surrounding residential fabric rather than be apart from it, as had been the case with the River Houses.

To accomplish this, he placed an urban plaza, internal to the complex but open to the surrounding neighborhood, along public walkways that invited the surrounding community into and through Peabody Terrace to the edge of the Charles River. Harvard had recently built its first high-rise dormitories nearby — the 12-story Leverett House "towers" by Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott — and Sert took advantage of the University's willingness to build vertically in order to provide an abundance of open space and pedestrian through-access to the river. The result was three groupings of 3-, 5-, 7-, and 22-story buildings and a 300-car multi-level garage. Peabody Terrace became home to 1,500 residents in 497 apartments — a mix of efficiency, one-, two-, and three-bedroom units — on six acres with a density of 83 units, or 250 persons, per acre.

As built, Peabody Terrace is a successful piece of urban design in which the buildings and open spaces fit together so well that the resulting composition conveys the sense that Sert molded the desired open spaces first and then fit his buildings into the voids. It is a model of design efficiency, economy, and attention to scale. At its edges, where it meets the adjacent community along the street, its buildings are three-stories high, in keeping with the scale of the surrounding wood-frame dwellings. The mid-rise and high-rise buildings are intelligently set back from the street and in most instances do not negatively affect the neighbors. With its 7'-6" ceiling heights, these are

Views of the renovated complex, top to bottom:

Kitchen; refurbished windows and balconies; and tower lobby

Peabody Terrace had been so tightly and efficiently planned that there was little tolerance for re-configuring interior spaces.

Lee Cott FAIA

THE RENOVATION OF PEABODY TERRACE

The renovation of Peabody Terrace presented serious challenges. The buildings have a primitive heating system due to the original 1963 construction-budget constraints and lack of sophistication about how to approach heating and ventilation in a complex this large. Peabody Terrace contains one heating loop and one zone; the tenants are unable to control individual apartment temperatures and rely on opening the building's colorful window panels to regulate room temperature. Sert's skip-stop elevators (the elevators stop at every third floor) and his famous six-apartments-around-a-stair module resulted in a very tightly detailed structural system with no room for vertical mechanical and electrical chases. All new systems, such as retrofitted sprinklers and fire-alarm wiring, therefore have been surface mounted and are completely visible.

Peabody Terrace's white painted-steel window frames had long outlived their useful life by 1993. Extensive rust, due to 30 years of condensation, necessitated complete window replacement. Specially constructed aluminum thermal-break insulating-glass windows were designed and installed, approximating the thin profiles of the original steel sash.

Most problematic of all was the extensive amount of exterior concrete repair needed due to poor placement of reinforcing bars during the original construction and the subsequent careless maintenance of spalling concrete with an epoxy-concrete mixture that was harder than the host material. Repair of cast-in-place concrete is neither a science nor an art. Success with patching concrete was largely a matter of luck, despite some remarkably sophisticated research and re-construction techniques. Some of the patches are completely invisible, while others are as unattractive as the problem they were intended to repair.

Peabody Terrace had been so tightly and efficiently planned that, in addition to the difficulties of upgrading building systems unobtrusively, there was little tolerance for re-configuring interior spaces. The work was limited to expansion and redesign of all kitchens and bathrooms, new data systems including cable TV, new flooring, window replacement, exterior concrete repair and restoration, and the renovation of community spaces. Because Harvard was not willing to close the entire complex for the reconstruction (which would require the relocation of the entire Peabody Terrace community), the work was performed in three phases over three 12-week summer periods — 166 units per summer. Sert's original project cost $8.4 million, including the garage. This renovation cost $23 million.

— *Lee Cott FAIA*

photos: © Steve Rosenthal

the shortest 22-story buildings around. Thus, Peabody Terrace's three towers are remarkably compatible with the adjacent towers of the Harvard River Houses.

And yet, the good intentions of the architect and Harvard University — to make the site open and welcoming to the public — have not resulted in a building complex that is liked by the community. Most ironic is the accusation that the site has closed off access to the riverfront, as community access to the river was Sert's central premise. Ultimately it may be the design itself that sends a negative signal to its neighbors. The unfriendly appearance of the concrete walls and perhaps the brick paving, a symbol of Harvard's wealth and power, appear unwelcoming. Sert undoubtedly recognized the potentially forbidding character of concrete, enlivening the riverfront façades with the now-iconic brightly colored panels, "eggcrate" balconies, and *brise-soleil* baffles. They are another reason why architects love Peabody Terrace; these façades are visually energetic in ways that few high-rise buildings can match.

Today, 40 years after its construction, Peabody Terrace is still loved by architects who respect not only its architecture, but also its spirit — the idea that it represents. Born of the tenets of CIAM — the International Congress of Modern Architecture that was the organizational focus of the Modern Movement — Peabody Terrace represents the nearly perfect fulfillment of the architectural and urban-design ideals of Modernism: architecture and urbanism supporting a full and healthy life for its residents. Sert's ambition was nothing less than to create a new high-density urban neighborhood in which all human needs would be cared for within an environment providing both privacy and community. (The siting of Sert's Martin Luther King public elementary school adjacent to Peabody Terrace further strengthened his vision of a new urbanism in the Riverside neighborhood. Like many thoughtful urban designers, Sert was already thinking beyond the borders of his Peabody Terrace site.)

Much can be learned from Peabody Terrace. It was, and remains to this day, a model for intelligently planned urban housing. But it also stands as testimony to an idealistic time of earnest intentions and the sincere conviction that architecture could be married to social purpose to produce a better way of life. ■■■

Lee Cott FAIA is a principal of Bruner/Cott & Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts and an adjunct professor of urban design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He was principal-in-charge of the renovation of Peabody Terrace in 1993-1995.

Why the Public (Still) Hates Peabody Terrace

by Otile McManus

For the community, it's not just about the dull, gray concrete, or the 22-story towers, or the way the buildings turn their back on the neighborhood streets. It's not just about the fence with the black privacy mesh. Or the 300-space parking garage with the rolling metal doors. Or the so-called public access to the Charles River that has never felt very public to many residents of the section of Cambridge known as Riverside. In the case of Peabody Terrace, the negative whole is definitely more than the sum of its negative parts.

Architect Josep Lluís Sert's 1964 ode to Modernism may stand as a lyrical icon to some, but it is a tall and brutal monument for many who live in the area bordered by Western Avenue, Memorial Drive, Massachusetts Avenue, and DeWolfe Street. The individual design elements and urban-planning features that have attracted architectural pilgrims from around the world are lost on a majority of those who must confront its presence daily.

"Monstrous," "monolith," "cold," "uninviting," "overwhelming," "hostile," "ugly" are just some of the words area residents use when asked to describe the cluster of buildings at 900 Memorial Drive. Some say the complex, originally built for married students, conjures visions of Soviet bloc housing. Some are incredulous that Sert — who once told an interviewer that Peabody Terrace was his favorite building — has been hailed as a visionary for trying to "relate" the buildings to the surrounding community. Others say Peabody Terrace is to its Cambridge neighborhood what Charles River Park is to Boston's West End: an enduring symbol of the havoc wrought by urban renewal.

"When you look at it, what you see is crates stacked on top of one another other. You see crates, windows, and so much cement. Crates, windows, and so much cement. Crates, windows, and so much cement. And then more cement," ventures Lawrence Adkins, who finds no intrinsic aesthetic value in Sert's modular approach.

Adkins, president of the Riverside Neighborhood Association, who still lives in the house where he grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, continues, "The towers go up more than 150 feet, and there may be great views for the students living there. But the whole place blocks the us from the river and the river from us."

Even more important, the 500-unit apartment complex, and the difficult feelings it evokes, are at the heart of the very tenuous, and sometimes antagonistic, relationship between the Riverside community and Harvard University. Although more than 40 years have passed since ground was broken on the six-acre site, the lingering shadows cast by Peabody Terrace color the current debate about the physical growth of the university's franchise and its plans to build additional dormitories and faculty housing in the neighborhood where it owns property.

Organized resistance to Harvard's plans has sharpened over the past three years. An 18-month building moratorium scuttled the university's plans to build a riverfront museum on land abutting Peabody Terrace. The Riverside Neighborhood Study Committee, convened by the City of Cambridge, has been pushing the planning board to downzone the area and adopt measures limiting the size and height of any new buildings.

Riverside's residential streets are lined with two- and three-family houses, along with workers' cottages, on small lots with tidy, fenced yards and narrow driveways. The streets were also once home to light industry, manufacturing, and small retail enterprises. In fact, one third of the Peabody Terrace site was home to The Reversible Collar Company since the turn of the century.

Riverside has long been a working-class community of Irish immigrants, African-Americans, and a few Italians. Among its residents were firemen, policemen, municipal workers, and scores of people who worked in the dining rooms and maintenance facilities at Harvard. "Harvard students used to have maids," recalls Joan Qualls Harris, whose father was born in a house on DeWolfe Street more than 100 years ago. "Those maids lived in this neighborhood." Now there is an eclectic mix of professionals and working people.

Riverside activists calculate that Harvard has razed at least 84 houses in Riverside since the 1930s for construction of the so-called River House dormitories — which include the "newer" Peabody Terrace as well as Leverett Towers (1959) and Mather House (1970). Maps distributed by activists indicate that the university now owns an additional 36 houses in the neighborhood, now targeted for demolition and dormitory expansion.

"This is the legacy of Peabody Terrace. Harvard imposed itself on the community then, and it wants to impose on the neighborhood now," explains Phyllis Bauman, a member of the neighborhood study committee and adjunct professor at Northeastern University Law School. Bauman, a 25-year area resident with family now living around the corner, says Harvard didn't see any need to discuss its plans for Peabody Terrace with the community in the early 1960s, and it doesn't believe it has any obligation to do so now. "They tell you what they plan to do, and then they tell you again, and again, with no room for discussion or negotiation," she adds.

At the time Peabody Terrace was built, it would not have crossed the institutional mind of any major university, hospital, corporation, or museum to engage the surrounding community in a discussion or negotiation of its plans. But times have changed and memories die hard.

Bridget Dinsmore still bristles when she describes the way Harvard security personnel chased area children from the property after Peabody Terrace first opened. Although Dinsmore's children made friends with children from Peabody Terrace at the Martin Luther King School — which was also designed by Sert and replaced the neighborhood's beloved Houghton School — their families were transient. Harvard also leased some of the retail space at Peabody Terrace to Johnny's, a sub shop that was popular with neighborhood residents, but it ultimately refused to renew the lease. Dinsmore also points out that when the complex was built, some area residents were displaced and had to move out. "It was tragic," she says.

photos: RoosterDesign

The Cambridge "Riverside" neighborhood today.

Neighborhood posters protesting Harvard expansion (2003).

At the time Peabody Terrace was built, it would not have crossed the institutional mind of any major university, hospital, corporation, or museum to engage the surrounding community in a discussion or negotiation of its plans

"My father-in-law always said that when Harvard built its high-rises, the neighborhood heating bills went up and so did the electric bills," Dinsmore recalls. "They took sun from the street so the houses were colder and darker."

Despite this history, many residents make a distinction between Harvard University and Harvard's Office of Real Estate and Planning and even take some pride that the university is internationally known and is an overall asset to Cambridge. But residents are also disappointed by Harvard's refusal to consider the options the Riverside Neighborhood Study Committee has proposed that would allow Harvard to build some smaller dormitories and in-fill faculty housing in the area. The university wants to maintain the existing height limit of 120 feet; and it has indicated that downzoning constitutes an unfair property taking, to use the parlance of eminent-domain proceedings.

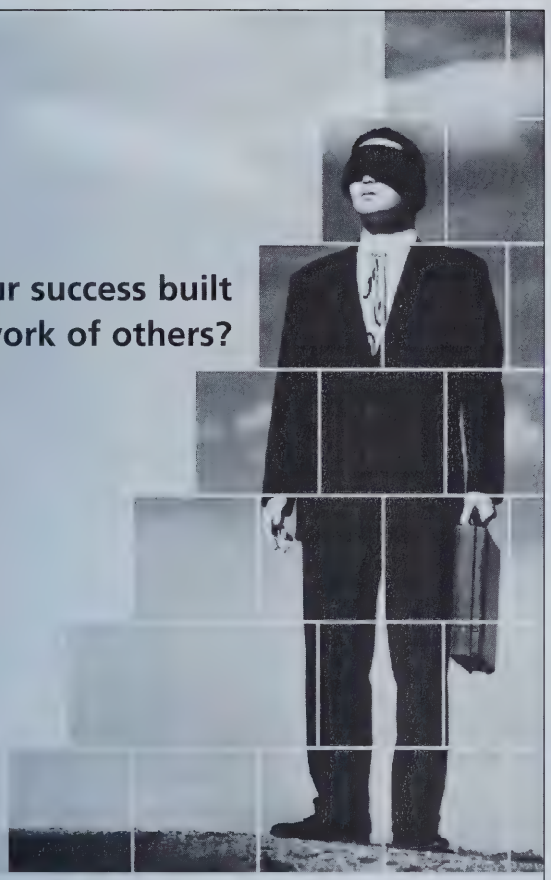
Yet ironies abound. At one meeting last spring, Cambridge city councilors listened to Riverside residents, the planning board, and Harvard representatives debate the proposed zoning changes. A consultant for Harvard, arguing for 120-foot buildings, put up a chart showing the higher profiles of other Harvard buildings, including Peabody Terrace. He told the group gathered at City Hall that Harvard has learned the lessons of the 1960s and will not build like that again.

The fact that Harvard is now using Peabody Terrace to make its case astonished some at the hearing, especially those who believe that development along the Charles should be limited and that green space should be preserved. As area resident Wendy Baring Gould pointed out, one need only look across the river to Harvard's brand-new high-rise dormitory in Allston.

"I drive by it on the way to work every morning. It is horrendous," Baring Gould exclaims. "What can Harvard be thinking? Unless, of course, it hopes to make Peabody Terrace look good by comparison."

Otile McManus produced *A Decent Place to Live*, a community history of Boston's Columbia Point. The book, by Jane Roessner, was published by Northeastern University Press in 1999. McManus is currently director of special projects at Corcoran Jennison Companies.

photo: © Phokion Karas, courtesy of the Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University



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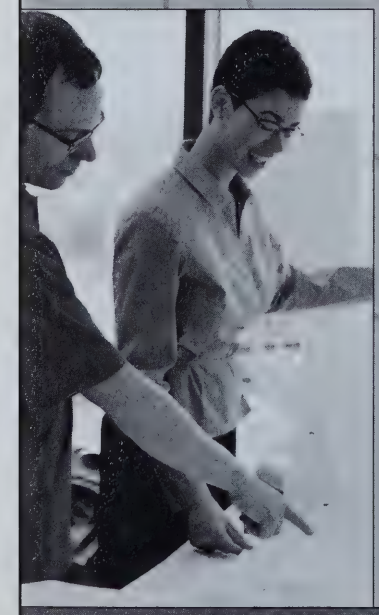

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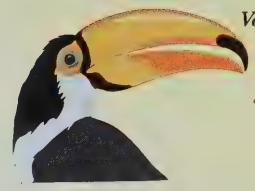

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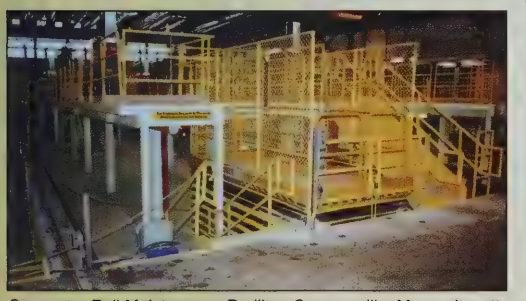

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River of Innovation

The tradition of contemporary architecture on the Charles River

by Max Page

One way to define the success of a building is that a half-century later people still hate it. Peabody Terrace remains a touchstone, generally admired by architects, generally derided by the public. But people still talk about it and argue about it. And in doing so, they are forced to think about architecture. One of the main purposes of architecture — its highest "ethical function," as Yale philosopher Karen Harries has said — is to challenge us to argue about what it means to dwell, to make homes in the world. Consensual architecture makes no sense at all.

Peabody Terrace belongs to a generation of buildings by architects who pushed the boundaries of architectural thinking, and did so regularly on the banks of the Charles River. Aalto's Baker House dormitory, Saarinen's Kresge Auditorium and Chapel at MIT, and the Polaroid Building by Coolidge Shepley Bulfinch and Abbott are among the most recognizable of these. Also significant, but less well known, are early Modern buildings by Carl Koch; Perry, Shaw and Hepburn; and SOM, among others. Even Harvard's houses along the Charles represented an important innovation in housing for Harvard College, despite their reliance upon Oxbridge models for inspiration. All of these buildings constituted an outdoor exhibition of mid-century architecture. They speak of a time when the Boston area — and Cambridge, especially — was at the cutting edge of architecture, giving humane Modernism its place.

In just the last several years, the Charles has once again become the setting for innovative new architecture. In the space of a few bends of the Charles have come Machado and Silvetti's graduate student housing for Harvard, and Frank Gehry's Stata Center, Fumihiko Maki's Media Lab, and Steven Holl's Simmons Hall at MIT. Some projects — including Renzo Piano's proposed art museum — have fallen victim to the persistent conservatism of the region's public processes and architectural rule-makers. For others (such as Robert Stern's Spangler Hall at the Harvard Business School) — well, we could only have wished them such a fate. But most of the new buildings represent a return to a tradition — yes, a tradition — of the Charles as a beacon for new architecture. Together these buildings have chipped away at Boston's conservatism, and perhaps paved the way for larger visions.

All this, however, has been done in piecemeal fashion, born in part of the desire to invite architectural stars to make their marks on the local landscape. Star architects are stars usually (although not always) because they are excellent architects who are equally adept at making and riding waves of publicity. There is nothing wrong with the quest for these luminaries. But rather than allow, as we usually do, architectural trends to haphazardly make their way onto the landscape, Boston should more consciously consider the city's designed future. In this time of Boston's revitalization — when the city is creating a new river for people in downtown Boston by sending the cars underground and giving the sunshine back to the people — we need a building exhibition, a grand vision for the future of the metropolitan region. And the Charles River, as the spine of the region, is the natural place for these visions to play out.

One source of inspiration for such an undertaking is Berlin, which has a long tradition of building exhibitions; the most recent, the International Building Exhibition of 1978 to 1987, offers an excellent model. West Berlin developed a novel organization — IBA (the International Building Exhibition) — to deal comprehensively with rebuilding the city, much of which still lay empty and unplanned after the war and the 1961 division of Berlin. IBA brought some of the finest architects and planners in the world to Berlin to build model housing complexes and public buildings that would anchor future development. It represented the unfathomable idea that tens of millions of public dollars would be dedicated to low-income housing (new construction as well as historic rehabilitation), to kindergartens, to schools, and to public parks. The architects who built these relatively understated projects constitute a list of some of the most important architects of the last 30 years: John Hejduk, Peter Eisenman, Charles Moore, Aldo Rossi, Rob Krier, Raimund Abraham. But equally important to IBA's approach was its mandate to look for opportunities for redevelopment beyond the center of the city, often in less visible areas. Berlin became the leader in new architecture and planning ideas, pioneering something it called "careful urban renewal."

Two of today's great architects made important marks in Berlin just a mile from one another — Daniel Libeskind with his Jewish Museum and Renzo Piano with his Potsdamer Platz projects. But the real revolution of IBA lay in the middle ground, with the dignified infill housing projects built within Berlin's *hof* (inner courtyard) tradition, while also making dramatic new architectural statements. New neighborhoods emerged: One of these — the area south of the infamous Checkpoint Charlie — had become something of a no-man's land, shut off from East Berlin, but also removed from the heart of the new center of West Berlin. With much of it bombed out, it lay desolate for years. Today it is a vibrant neighborhood, reconnected to the historic core of the city.

Boston and Berlin are worlds apart in so many ways. But Berlin's decision to jumpstart its architecture culture, and to simultaneously answer the compelling needs of its citizens, was a remarkable achievement. Some architects and urbanists like to say that when the going gets tough, the tough get planning. The sorry state of our local and national economy ironically makes the time ripe for thinking big, making visionary plans for a brighter economic future. Berlin and its tradition of building exhibitions might be just the model Boston needs.

As Boston continues to wrestle with what will happen to the Big Dig land, and as contemporary architecture springs up on both the Cambridge and Boston banks of the Charles, the two cities need to launch — with public and private funds — their own building exhibition, a series of built projects that will answer pressing needs, while jolting the region out of its architectural stupor. The greatest of needs is housing. This is the moment to revitalize not only existing public housing complexes (as has happened recently, sometimes with great success), but also the ideal of creating common good through architecture. We are about to lose one river, a river of cars that had no place in the heart of 400-year-old Boston. We could stand to gain a new river of social justice. ■■■

Max Page is an assistant professor of architecture and history at University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He is the author of *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900–1940* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), winner of the 2001 Spiro Kostof Award of the Society of Architectural Historians. A winner of a 2003–2004 Guggenheim Fellowship, he is writing a cultural history entitled *The City's First Two Centuries in Points as Points and Processes of New York's Destruction*. He is also co-editor (with Steven Conn) of *Building the Nation: Americans Write about Their Architecture, Their Cities, and Their Landscape* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

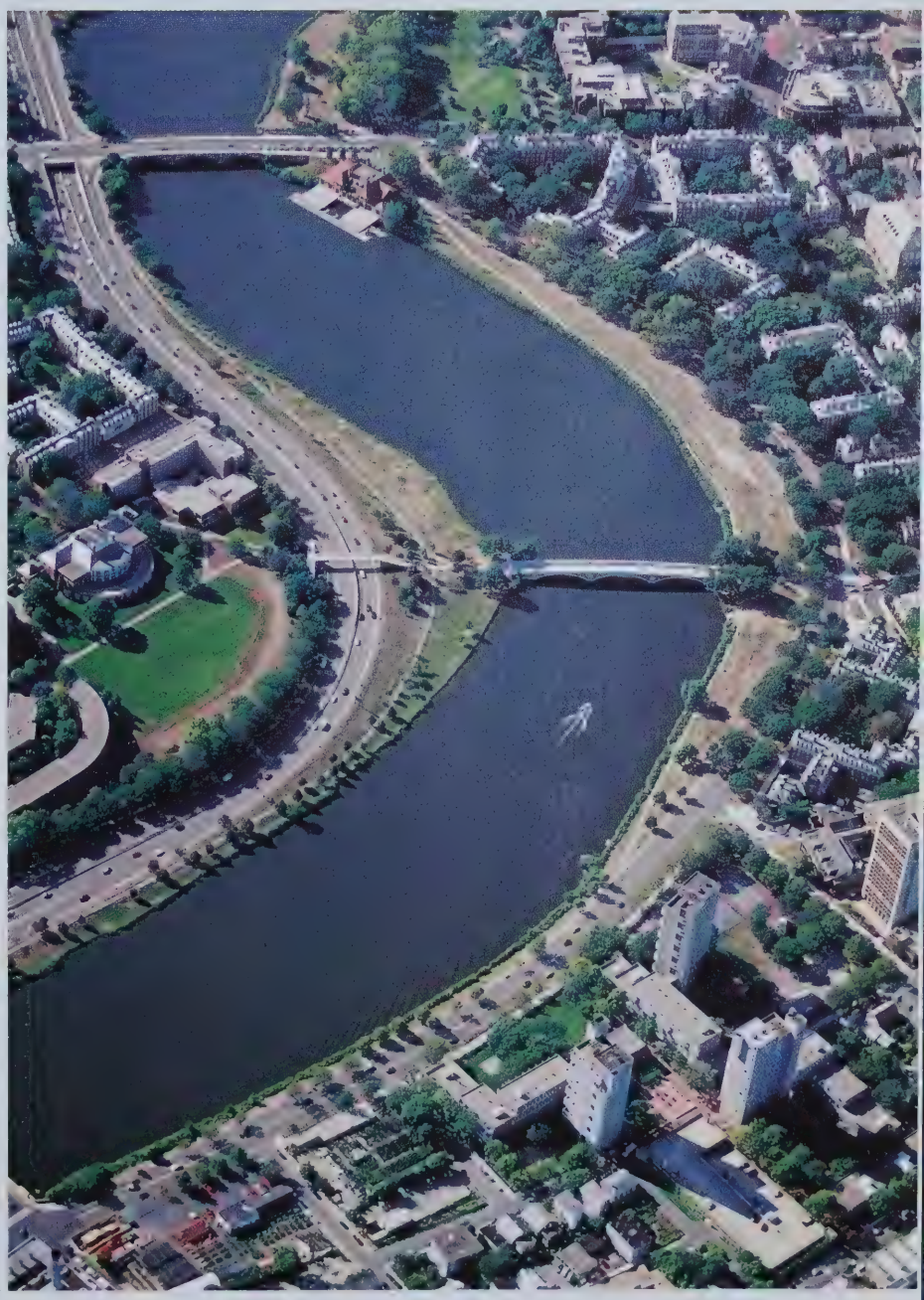
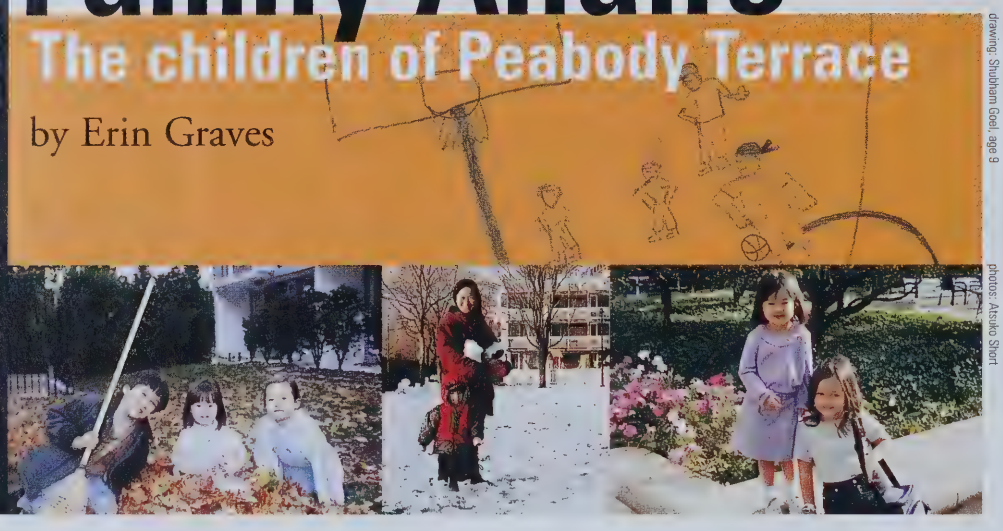


photo ©Alex S. Maclean, landslides

Family Affairs

The children of Peabody Terrace

by Erin Graves



drawing: Shubham Goel, age 9

photos: Atsuko Short

When I was kid and boxes of hand-me-downs arrived at our house, my sister and I received them with both joy and trepidation. We hoped that the boxes would contain new-looking, brand-name pieces. We worried that they might hold ill-fitting clothes that were "out."

By the early 1990s, children moving into Peabody Terrace might have approached their new home with similarly mixed emotions. Peabody Terrace had a brand-name designer but, for a child, the complex was ill-fitting, uncomfortable, and — let's face it — out of style. After 30 years of constant resident turnover and deferred maintenance, Peabody Terrace was looking a little shabby — a long fall from its initial celebrity.

The needs of students with families are frequently overlooked in many colleges and universities. It was Anne Pusey, wife of then Harvard president Nathan Pusey, who first identified the need for married graduate student housing in the late 1950s. At the time, the Cambridge housing stock was limited and run down. Foreign graduate students were especially vulnerable to the poor housing conditions, since they often accepted apartments sight unseen. Mrs. Pusey envisioned a residential complex that would provide students and their families with modern accommodations and instant community. Commissioned to design what would become a residential development of 500 apartments, architect Josep Lluís Sert followed Mrs. Pusey's mandate and included several features for children. The most obvious of these were the childcare center, playgrounds, and playroom. The red and green exterior vents as well as the lattice-like arrangement of the balconies also contributed to the playfulness of the buildings.

Over the next 30 years, Peabody Terrace became worse for wear. The playroom, once a site for childcare co-ops, fell into disrepair and disuse. Families, many of whom stayed at Peabody Terrace for the entirety of their American experience, struggled to find room for the Thanksgiving turkey — plus all the fixings — in their under-the-counter refrigerators. Cambridge residents who considered Harvard to be a bad neighbor could take cold comfort that it didn't treat its own much better.

In 1993, Harvard decided that it was time to restore the aging icon. Bruner/Cott & Associates, the architects for the renovation, upgraded the building's systems and restored or refinished its materials. But the biggest significant changes from the residents' point of view were the upgrades in livability: larger kitchens, more storage, built-in desks. The playroom and childcare center were renovated, following cues from the original design.

The restoration had a revitalizing effect on the complex, and it once again became a favorite among graduate students with families. With its two- and three-bedroom apartments, childcare facilities, and play space, Peabody Terrace has the effect of clustering family life at Harvard in one place.

For at least one Harvard family, the Peabody Terrace of today couldn't be a better fit. Atsuko Short (pictured above, center) has lived at Peabody Terrace with her husband for five years. With three children ranging in age from one to eight years old, Short is seemingly the tenant for whom Sert designed this project; she has readily incorporated all of Peabody Terrace's amenities — the childcare center, the playroom, the many parks and outdoor play areas — into her family domain. Her younger children frequent the playroom and the lawns, and her older daughter practices the piano in the common room, which is also the site of the children's birthday parties. All of her children have friends in the neighborhood; the local elementary school and city park encourage sociability.

Peabody Terrace is not without its frustrations. In fact, many residents of Peabody Terrace seem to be surprised to learn that they live in an architectural landmark, an icon of Modern architecture. "Icon?" jokes one resident. "More like eyesore." Another student responds, "Oh really, you've made me feel much better about living here. I just thought it was ugly." Lugging groceries and furniture up the stairs from the elevator lobbies is a chore. The residents of Peabody Terrace are not exclusively families, and students sometimes behave as students: On occasion, door buzzers sound in the middle of the night with the drunken revelry of a neighbor's late-night party.

But many residents have found that Peabody Terrace accommodates family life exceptionally well. Children can be surprisingly consistent: What they want from their clothing, they want from their housing — that it be aesthetically pleasing, allow for freedom of movement, and enable that activity which is the province of childhood: play. For a while, families seemed to have outgrown Peabody Terrace, but it proved to need only some minor alterations. Today play is in evidence everywhere in the complex — in the cheery blocks of color inside and outside the apartments, and in the well-lit and functional play areas. They reveal Sert's understanding of the timeless essentials of childhood — and suggest that the celebrated architect and educator also understood and reveled in his own sense of play. ■ ■ ■

Erin Graves is a planning intern at the Central Artery/Tunnel Project's architecture and urban design group and is a doctoral student in MIT's department of urban studies and planning.

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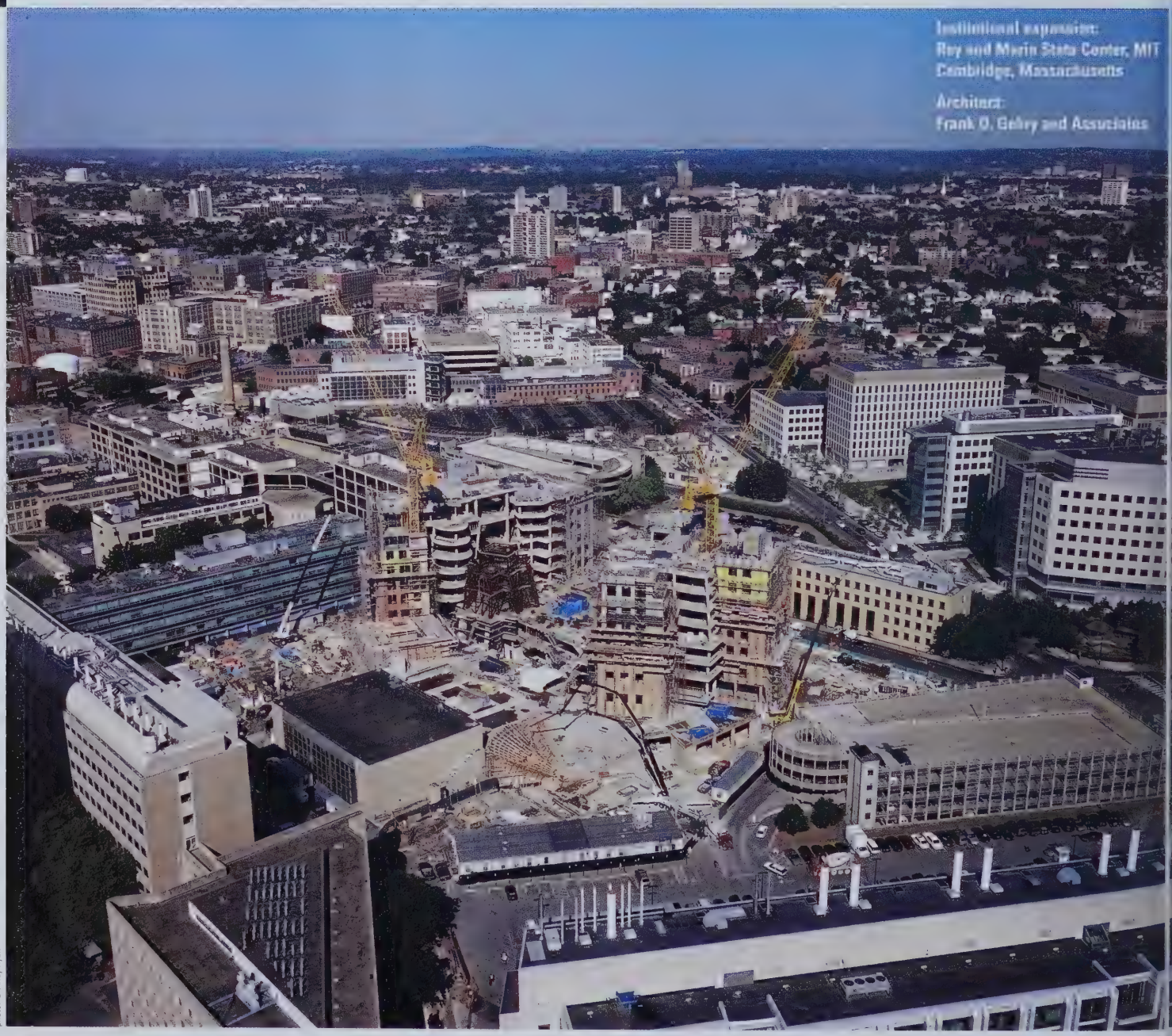
Imposing Architecture

The problem of design politics

Lawrence J. Vale talks with
Hubert Murray AIA, RIBA



Institutional expansion:
Roy and Marie Stata Center, MIT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Architect:
Frank O. Gehry and Associates

photo: © Andy Ryan

LAWRENCE J. VALE is professor and head of the department of urban studies and planning at MIT, where his work focuses on the history, politics, and sociology of urban design. He is the author of *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (1992); *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors* (2000); and *Reclaiming Public Housing: Continuing Struggles and New Directions* (2002). He is also co-editor of *Imaging the City: Continuing Struggles and New Directions* (2001).

HUBERT MURRAY AIA, RIBA is the principal of Hubert Murray Architect + Planner in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

HUBERT MURRAY: It's often said that new buildings in universities should advance the discussion of architecture and urbanism at a level that matches the level of academic debate within the institution. It seems fair to view Harvard's Peabody Terrace in this light. Has this building complex served as a new paradigm for student housing — or housing in general? Has it pointed the way for architecture and urbanism over the past 40 years?

LAWRENCE VALE: Great architecture always needs great clients, and universities, at least the wealthy ones, are great clients. In part that's because they control their own campuses and, therefore, they are their own neighbors. Sometimes, though, they build at the campus edge and are seen as moving onto the turf of others. That seems to be what happened with Peabody Terrace. It was planned during the early '60s and built in 1964 — at exactly the cusp of the demand for neighborhood control over development. It came at the end of a period when whole neighborhoods were razed with little say from the residents.

HUBERT MURRAY: One of the formal criticisms of Peabody Terrace at the time it was built was that it was a compromised Modernism. It was much gentler and much more open to the neighborhood than a typical Modern Movement development would have been, and the distinction between high- and low-rise was somewhat muted.

LAWRENCE VALE: It was quite innovative in the relationship between the high- and the low-rise, but it still manages, however unintentionally, to create an enclave. The placement of that strip of Harvard between the neighborhood and the river is a diagram of power relations between the university and those who feel walled off from the view.

HUBERT MURRAY: The three courtyards in Peabody Terrace are in a sense a departure from the spirit of urban openness enshrined in Harvard buildings in that they are much more closely related to medieval cloisters and are therefore sequestered from the community. Even though there's an intended permeability and access to those courtyards by the general public is part of that intention, it simply hasn't happened.

LAWRENCE VALE: The spatial intent may be in conflict with the political reality. The unwillingness to walk through Harvard property and walk among Harvard students may simply be part of the problem, especially for those who felt uncomfortable about the presence of Harvard buildings where once there had been private-sector buildings.

HUBERT MURRAY: So your argument would be that regardless of the architecture, that divide might exist anyway?

LAWRENCE VALE: The town-gown divide certainly predated Peabody Terrace. In the earlier part of the century, the river was a less valuable commodity. As the river became a recreational asset throughout the course of the 20th century, accessibility became perceived as much more of a public right. The control of the riverfront by Harvard and MIT — not to mention Boston University on the other side of the river — would have been perceived as a potential barrier.

HUBERT MURRAY: And yet MIT offers an interesting comparison with two notable buildings: Aalto's Baker House and Rapson and Koch's 100 Memorial Drive — both of which were completed in 1949, both of which occupy remarkable positions on the Charles River, both of which were seen, and are still considered, models of innovative Modern design.

Great architecture always needs great clients, and universities are great clients. Sometimes, though, they build at the campus edge and are seen as moving onto the turf of others.

Lawrence Vale

photo courtesy MIT Museum

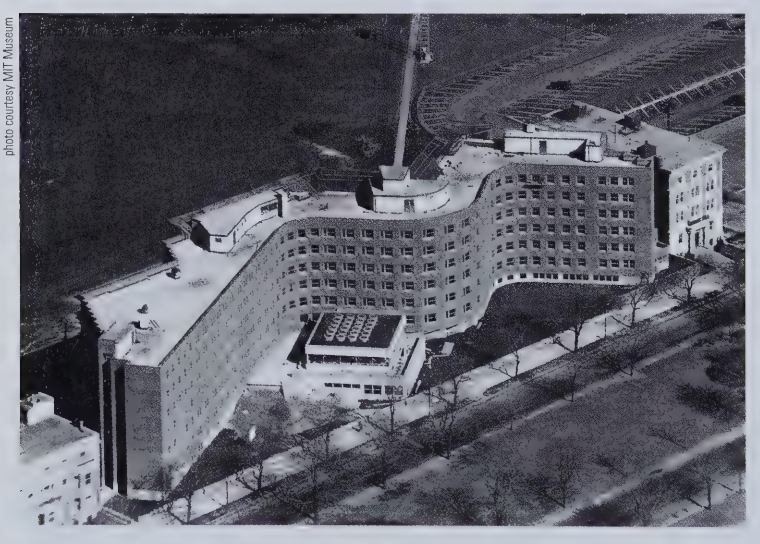


photo courtesy MIT Museum

Top:
Model of 100 Memorial Drive (1949)
MIT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Bottom:
Baker House (1949)
MIT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

But they have not engendered the same controversy as Peabody Terrace, undoubtedly because they were not sited within a residential community.

LAWRENCE VALE: I think that's a fundamental difference. They were built on landfill and their neighbors were other parts of the campus. They're also somewhat lower and less anomalous on the skyline than Peabody Terrace. The "wall" between MIT and its neighbors occurs farther inland and has sparked its share of controversy as well.

HUBERT MURRAY: What is fascinating is that the river — which is so central to the experience of both Baker House and 100 Memorial Drive and is such a formidable component of the politics of Peabody Terrace — is actually not all that apparent from inside the Peabody Terrace complex.

LAWRENCE VALE: It is a building that engages the river from its higher levels. It was intended to be a secure place for people raising young children and is therefore as internalized as possible. That represents an attitude typical of that time — the larger effort to accommodate a particular vision of family life in large, Modernist housing complexes. Much of the whole mentality behind the creation of the megablock was an attempt to separate children from traffic. If you go back to the 1929 plan for New York and its environs and you look at the famous monograph by Clarence Perry about the neighborhood unit, you'll see that one of his first illustrations is a map showing where fatal traffic accidents happened in Manhattan during the late 1920s.

HUBERT MURRAY: Separating traffic from pedestrians became a major theme of the Modern Movement. But one of the results of that approach was the loss of the street and street-generated activity as a social medium.

LAWRENCE VALE: Yes. You can see that in the plan for what was the quintessential Modernist housing experiment — the late-1950s plan for Brasilia, just a few years ahead of Peabody Terrace. The plan presumed that everyone would gather in the open spaces within the *superquadras*. In fact, everyone flocked to the little bit of retail activity on the strips between that were the closest approximation of a traditional street.

HUBERT MURRAY: We are still searching for that social focus in modern-day urban design and planning. Clearly, it is something that Sert was searching for, and it is something that was central to the Modern Movement. To what extent can architecture be regarded as an instrument of social reform?

LAWRENCE VALE: I don't know if Sert was as vociferous about those kinds of things as was Gropius — or others of that slightly earlier generation. Certainly, social reform was very much at the heart of many Modernist housing schemes, whether it was the European emphasis in the '20s and '30s on workers' housing, or the American experiments with public housing just before and after World War II. The thought was that moral reform came part and parcel with reforming the site plan. These new kinds of housing were intended to be stylistically different from what preceded them, and the assumption was that the residents would be improved, too, almost as if an entirely new kind of human being would live in an entirely new kind of housing. American public housing facilitated this through a tenant-selection process that accepted only those who had the proper income, proper family structure, proper citizenship, proper credentials, and proper housekeeping. It enabled the proponents to crow about having eliminated juvenile delinquency through the force of Modern architecture, but the reality was that they had simply replaced the previous populations with a more carefully selected cohort.

HUBERT MURRAY: Let's talk a bit about the architecture of Peabody Terrace. I like to say that one of the ways you can tell an architect from a regular member of humanity is that laypeople don't particularly like Boston's City Hall. I think that's also probably true of Peabody Terrace. Architects love Peabody Terrace. And it seems to me that what they love is the technology, what I would call the three-dimensional jigsaw of the plans and sections, the skip-stop elevators, the balconies as emergency egresses. The components contained within Peabody Terrace were, if not the first of their kind, at least representative of the Modernist vocabulary in public housing in Europe and in the US. Would you say that Peabody Terrace was perhaps a transfer point for these aspects of Modernist thinking?

LAWRENCE VALE: Actually, I think the transfer occurred 15 years before Peabody Terrace. The 100 Memorial Drive building by Rapson, Koch and their colleagues introduced skip-stop elevators on a riverfront dormitory site. Many of the innovations that are credited to Peabody Terrace came earlier. Peabody Terrace came after the now-infamous skip-stop elevators of Pruitt-Igoe and other public housing projects in St. Louis. I think Peabody Terrace was really more of an attempt to adapt some of the Modernist thinking that had already been used in the public sector to a private client, and to try and do so in a way that sidestepped some of the problems. There was, for example, a great deal of concern about community and privacy — Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander wrote a book with that very title about that time, which was an attempt to understand how high-density housing could maximize both of those values. Peabody Terrace made some significant advances in that area, which had been singularly absent from public housing both here and in Europe. I tend to be quite a fan of Peabody Terrace's architecture, as I am of most of Sert's work. But it is, as you suggest, an appeal that is driven by the skill with which Sert rendered the complex façades and molded together the high-rise and low-rise buildings using a single module, and the skill with which he took advantage of cross-ventilation and skip-stop elevators [which stop only at every third floor, with stair access for the units above and below]. But when you try to apply similar technologies to a much less advantaged community, let alone one more likely to have disabled people struggling with the stairs and wondering why the elevator can't stop on their floor, and struggling to supervise children in the hidden stairwells, you end up with an opportunity for pathology rather than a simple, clever innovation. The translation never worked very well in a very low-income setting, but has worked with some success for those who have lived in Peabody Terrace over the years.

HUBERT MURRAY: One way Sert tried to address the community and privacy issue was in his courtyards, creating a community within the housing complex. If we look at Steven Holl's new Simmons Hall dormitory at MIT, he too is creating common spaces, but they are intended only for the resident community, not for the wider community. The same could be said of Peabody Terrace.

LAWRENCE VALE: I think that's right. Porosity is the reigning metaphor that Holl used in his design. However, it is not visibly porous to the community. But when you get inside, you see what the fuss — as well as much of the expense — was about. What he has done is to create student lounges in the form of vertical breakthroughs — internal, cave-like incursions into the otherwise rectilinear building — in order to create opportunities for the

Separating traffic from pedestrians became a major theme of the Modern Movement. But one of the results of that approach was the loss of the street and street-generated activity as a social medium.

Hubert Murray AIA

photo © Anny Ryan

Student lounge
Simmons Hall
MIT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Architect: Steven Holl Architects

formation of varying communities. There are stairwells from multiple entrances at multiple levels that enter into these vertical spaces, some as high as four levels and some with skylights. Working with the students who would live there, he tried to identify sub-communities within the building who would use these spaces.

HUBERT MURRAY: These are communities of interest rather than geography?

LAWRENCE VALE: Exactly. Instead of simply going to the lounge that is closest to their room, people are able to identify with certain kinds of preferences and interests and to try and find each other even if they are not physically located near each other in the building. So those who are fond of cooking have a space that has a large kitchen; those who are fond of sports have one with a large television in it. People find one another based on interests, even if they physically live at some distance within the building itself. And I gather that that aspect of it has been very well received by students.

HUBERT MURRAY: Whereas my interpretation of Peabody Terrace is that that level of sophistication in the programming is relatively absent. The sole communal theme in Peabody Terrace is children. But another aspect of Simmons that does resemble Peabody Terrace is that despite its intended "porosity," it still excludes the neighborhood.

LAWRENCE VALE: Buildings, like cities, have fronts and backs. Simmons parallels the railroad track that is already the greater barrier to the neighborhood. In the case of Peabody Terrace, which fronts onto the river, residents feel that Harvard has turned its back on them. It is a very common phenomenon. My favorite example is Lincoln Center, where you have the grand entrance to all of the palaces of high culture, and then when you go around back — and almost no one except someone driving a service vehicle would want to — you have a cliff of blankness that backs harshly onto the public housing project immediately behind the complex. It says very clearly who this cultural institution is for and who it isn't. Those kinds of juxtapositions — institution to institution, or institution to resident — are part of what I call the "design politics" of cities. People often think of design as one thing and politics as the force that constrains it. But I have long argued the two have to be seen as part of the same concept. Designers, whether they know it or not, have a political standpoint, and politics often encodes a design.

HUBERT MURRAY: It's interesting you bring that up in this context. In defense of Peabody Terrace, I think the low-rise apartments on Putnam Avenue are well-scaled, although they are built of concrete, an inhospitable material when compared with the stick-built vernacular houses in neighborhood. Sert made a couple of moves, however, that are problematic. One is the parking garage that fronts right onto the street and the sidewalk, a brutal and impermeable edge to the neighborhood. The other is the King School, which Sert designed a few years later. If you look down the main pedestrian walkway of Peabody Terrace toward

the King School, you see a great concrete wall, another impermeable edge to the street. Both Lincoln Center and Peabody Terrace, in their different ways — and presumably despite best intentions — are self-contained megablocks. We have at least made progress in getting away from that megablock mentality.

LAWRENCE VALE: I think that's right. The barriers that were created by Peabody Terrace are not necessarily the result of design intent. Feeling unwanted in someone else's space is a question of the design politics. It happens wherever an institution borders a more diversified set of neighbors — not just town-gown situations. And you are right to emphasize that the move away from the megablock toward the small-grain residential scale ought to make these juxtapositions less likely to fester into longstanding disputes and resentments. I think the challenge is to accommodate community viewpoints, but ultimately the community changes while the physicality of the built work endures. So the building has to encode something in its intrinsic nature that outlasts the politics of that particular community.

HUBERT MURRAY: What's a good example of that?

LAWRENCE VALE: Tent City in Boston, 20 years in the making, manages the incredibly difficult transition from the the brick fabric of the South End to the back of Copley Place in a very effective way.

HUBERT MURRAY: That's another example of managing scale and height in a residential environment. It's a four-story residential complex that rises up to 12 stories.

LAWRENCE VALE: The problem is that for every story of the building there was a longer story of how it came to be. One could hardly credit that process as an ideal one, except that in the end, it met the needs of a very diverse set of constituencies and also is a distinguished work of architecture.

HUBERT MURRAY: Columbia Point's transformation from a downtrodden low-income housing project into the mixed-income Harbor Point is similar, in a sense, to the development of Tent City. Both represent the gradual transition of the heroic period of social architecture into a much more accommodating form of social program in which public rental and market ownership are mixed up together. Ironically, this period also represents the transformation of thinking of housing as a fundamental right provided by government to the current mode of thinking, which is housing as a privilege accessible through the market.

LAWRENCE VALE: One can view the initial wave of public housing construction in the late '30s and '40s and even early '50s as a kind of reward for the worthy, upwardly mobile working poor. But what do you do when those sorts of people are not the ones dominating your waiting list? That challenge is one that we've utterly failed to manage over the last 40 years or so. Lately the tendency has been to tear down the public housing system and to replace it with housing that serves a much less needy population. The 1998 public housing reform legislation was called the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act — you couldn't ask for a more puritanical tone to the message. It meant that public housing was not going to be for "those" people anymore; it was going to be a place where the carefully vetted working poor could live in safety. It means that we, as a society, have been collectively abandoning the effort to house the lowest-income people.

HUBERT MURRAY: I think that this loss of nerve about social programs is accompanied by a similar loss of nerve in architectural form-making. That is, Modernism was seen to be part of the problem — the massiveness, the megablocks. Postmodernism represents a retreat to fishing around for iconic clues to our past with almost no content, which gives rise to the formlessness we see around us. But perhaps this is now being exorcised somewhat in urban public housing and university projects.

LAWRENCE VALE: Yes. I think that the whole question of where progressive architecture is going when it comes to multi-family housing has, unfortunately, been dominated by a retrograde, New Urbanist vision that has tried to simply mimic aspects of the urbanism of the past without really coming up with a terribly innovative alternative. Some would say that is the problem; multi-family housing is the wrong place for innovation. You shouldn't experiment with lower-income people — that should be left to the elite who can afford to live in or replace the mistakes that they have allowed architects to make. But the message in some of the really iconic dormitory design that universities have championed is that multi-family housing can be a place for experimentation. Often with mixed results, certainly. But these kinds of projects always offer the opportunity and the possibility that we might learn something new. ■■■

The message... is that multi-family housing can be a place for experimentation. Often with mixed results, certainly. But these kinds of projects always offer the opportunity and the possibility that we might learn something new.

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Covering the Issues

Periodical roundup

by Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA

Let's get dense... Since 1970, the population of Massachusetts has grown 30 percent, while our developed land grew 180 percent. Something is totally out of whack, and politicians are taking notice. Or at least Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney has. Romney has created a new "super cabinet" Office of Commonwealth Development to oversee traditionally separate transportation, environment, and housing agencies, and has hired long-time environmentalist Doug Foy to lead the coordinated "stop sprawl" charge. In "The Sprawl Doctor is In," (*CommonWealth*, Spring 2003), Michael Jonas outlines the Bay State's Houston-like trends and discusses the controversial Foy. The former head of the Conservation Law Foundation, lawsuit-savvy Foy is famous for pushing both the $6-billion Boston Harbor clean-up and the Big Dig's $3-billion commitment to public transit. The stakes are high, but his strategy is clear: "The only way we're going to save the countryside is by making the [towns and] cities great." Hear, hear.

I'll do it myself... Rapper Snoop Dogg sporting a power sander? Rocker Tommy Lee's guitar skills applied to a cordless drill? These scenes and more are flooding our airwaves as home-improvement shows scramble to outdo one another. Currently over 100 programs on network and cable broadcast info on how to build a bed, refinish a floor, or surprise your spouse or neighbor with a decorating makeover. These prodigious offspring of Martha Stewart, Bob Vila, and Tim the Toolman have taken over daytime TV, replacing anguished discussions of relationship dilemmas with straightforward results and how-to. Architects love to lament our public lack of design literacy, but perhaps this sends us a sign that Martha really has sparked a national discussion on how we live and what our spaces look like. As for the more pressing question of which one to watch, in "This Renovation Will Be Televised" (*Dwell*, June 2003), Cathy Lang Ho gives us a guide to the shows.

Guest services... "The words and ideas of architecture, once the official language of space, no longer seem capable of describing this proliferation of new conditions" writes architect Rem Koolhaas about the borders, control zones, and markets of a deregulated, globalized world. As guest editor of the June 2003 *Wired*, Koolhaas invited 30 writers, researchers, critics, and artists to describe both the obsolete and emerging spaces of today. Using his usual formula of short essays, sexy graphics, and mundane-yet-shocking statistics, Koolhaas does here what he does best: show us the places we thought we knew through new eyes. Observations alternate between quirky and staggering. (By 2015, population will exceed 5 million in 58 metro areas, 48 located outside the developed world. "Acousmatic spaces" — spaces with hidden voices that speak to us, like elevators, T stops, and automated grocery checkouts — are growing.) All 30 essays have implications for the built environment. Koolhaas prods, but offers no answers.

Rolling, rolling, rolling... I've seen the future and it's on wheels. My clairvoyant is Tom Vanderbilt, author of "The New Mobility" (*I.D.*, May 2003). No longer the exclusive purview of '60s visionaries or trailer-park doyens, mobile architecture defines designers' new frontier. Today, 2.8 million Americans live in RVs, and 20 percent of new home purchases are manufactured houses. New materials, technologies, and social conditions have changed how both architects and owners approach all things mobile. (Vanderbilt includes prefab in this group, too.) In this broad survey, Vanderbilt highlights what's happening now, from transformed shipping containers to competition-winning entries for a portable HIV/AIDS health clinic to hip, high-end houses-on-wheels.

Slow down... Remember John Ruskin? Sure you do: he's the 19th-century British writer who elevated architectural criticism to social commentary. Required reading on most architectural history syllabi, his rants against profit-driven industrialists, Venetian decadence, and machine-made products helped spark the Arts and Crafts movement. In "Ruskin's Power" (*The American Scholar*, Spring 2003), Wesleyan professor Phyllis Rose reminds us that his message transcends his time. Though not an easy read, slowing down to soak Ruskin in again will be well worth it. ■■■

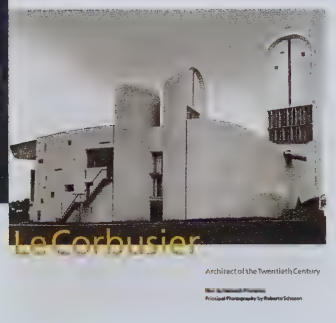
Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, teaches the architecture studios at Smith College and maintains a practice in Boston.

Books

Le Corbusier: Architect of the Twentieth Century

by Kenneth Frampton; photographs by Roberto Schezen
Harry N. Abrams, 2002

Reviewed by
Tamara Roy AIA



Do you remember when you first fell in love with Le Corbusier? There was that confused, "I've never seen anything like this before" feeling — and then, a swooning, as your earlier ideas of architecture melted away in the dark of a professor's persuasive slide show. You couldn't wait to bring "Corb" home to your parents (OK, they hated him), but that didn't stop you from following him all around Europe. Looking back on your first love, what do think now?

As Kenneth Frampton points out in *Le Corbusier: Architect of the Twentieth Century*, "We will never finish with Le Corbusier." His reasons include the fact that Le Corbusier's buildings and theories are so numerous that they defy any one historian's grasp, and that with contradictory impulses, Corb continues to influence architects of many generations. But there is a more compelling reason. Le Corbusier exposed the softer, human side of architecture with fluid forms and sensual choreographies of movement that create tension with his taut exteriors. *That* is what is enduring.

In the 10-page introduction, Frampton charts the shifting currents of Le Corbusier's theoretical and tectonic work, from his purist paintings to the Dom-Ino House — his system for concrete house construction — and *Plan Voisin* — his radical plan for Paris featuring apartment blocks in park-like settings. The body of the book focuses on 17 projects, many recently renovated, which are illustrated with new photographs by Roberto Schezen, plans, isometrics, and original sketches. The accompanying text details the architect/client relationship, the program, and Le Corbusier's intentions. The sketches reveal his simultaneous obsession with designing boxes and his struggle to make them more human.

If you were hoping, as I did, that your passion for Le Corbusier might be reignited, you may be disappointed. Kenneth Frampton is a reserved historian whose dry writing style, with its emphasis on tectonic rather than sensual qualities, is informative but not inviting. Without exception, the exterior views are so closely cropped that the projects become completely removed from their physical context — vigorously avoiding an examination of how the immutable, "modern" object has stood up to the changing landscape. Most of all, Schezen's black-and-white photographs do not make palpable the experience of Le Corbusier's architecture in the changing colors of morning, afternoon, and evening light. This is especially true of the chapel at Ronchamp, but also of the Unité d'Habitation, Chandigarh, and La Tourette.

Despite Frampton and Schezen's predictable retreat to the safety of the uncontested and defensible, Le Corbusier's work still manages to capture our hearts. We know that our "first love" hasn't changed, but perhaps we have, and we find ourselves recasting his legacy into a warmer mold of Modernism that can still inspire us today.

Tamara Roy AIA is a senior project designer at Elkus/Manfredi Architects in Boston.

The Harvard University Campus Guide: An Architectural Tour

by Douglass Shand-Tucci; photographs by Richard Cheek
Princeton Architectural Press, 2001

Reviewed by
James McCown

Elite American college campuses make for the most interesting architectural canvases. What designers wouldn't want to make their mark on one of these sylvan precincts of higher learning? Mindful of the interest such places command, Princeton Architectural Press's "Campus Guide" series takes in-depth looks at great campuses from Boston to Charlottesville to Palo Alto and numerous places in between.

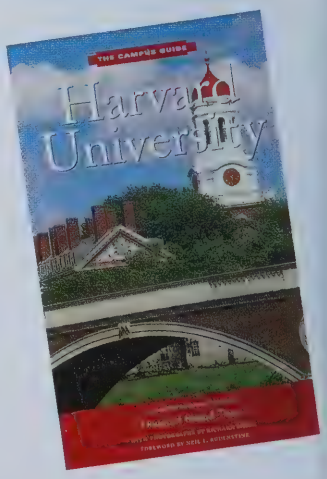
The Harvard version, written by Douglass Shand-Tucci, is filled with fascinating stories about the university's 367 years of architectural history and distinction. Sample anecdotes: The Casablanca restaurant in Harvard Square is the result of the Humphrey Bogart cult that originated in the 1950s at the adjoining Brattle Cinema; a Biblical quote about "truth" on the portal of St. Paul's Catholic Church is a defiant Roman Catholic stab at Harvard's pompous Puritan "Veritas" motto. Who knew?

The several "walks" around which Shand-Tucci organizes the book are accompanied by maps and drawings as well as photographs by Richard Cheek. And yet, even with the author's erudition and depth of knowledge, the book is a frustrating read. Shand-Tucci is like the absent-minded professor who waxes on for hours about some subject unrelated to what he is teaching, and then apologizes for "digressing" just as the bell sounds for the change of classes. He often gets so wrapped up in a side story that he forgets even to mention anything about architecture. He calls Moshe Safdie's Rosovsky Hall "pretty interesting" without ever saying why; Minoru Yamasaki's William James Hall is "appalling," but again no architectural basis is offered for the comment. And some of the writing is just plain awful, as when he discusses the famous "city upon a hill" speech of Massachusetts Bay Colony Governor John Winthrop: "It was Winthrop's words that three centuries later on the eve of his inauguration as President of the United States in 1961, John F. Kennedy would quote to the Great and General Court of Massachusetts of his day, whose predecessors I am far from denying were founders even before John Harvard of all you see now!" Maybe it's time for another round of trials in Salem — this time for bad writing.

For a publisher with the toney reputation of Princeton Architectural Press, allowing this kind of babble into print is outrageous, and there are yet more surprising examples of sloppy editing and fact-checking. Senator McCarthy's Communist purges are said to be "in the '60s"; Le Corbusier is referred to as "the French master" (he was Swiss); and a longtime Cambridge landmark, the Grolier Poetry Book Shop, is consistently misspelled — despite the presence of a contradictory photograph. And finally, the drawings that illustrate the walks are confusing. For example, one shows the landmark Adolphus Busch Hall without its signature green onion dome (As a Cambridge resident, I'm constantly using this as a visual point of reference for visitors.)

Shand-Tucci has so many interesting stories to tell. But maybe he needs some help in telling them.

James McCown is director of communications and marketing at Schwartz/Silver Architects in Boston. He also writes on architectural subjects for *Boston* magazine, *Art New England*, and other regional and national publications.



Josep Lluís Sert

(no author)
Rockport Publishers, 2003

Reviewed by
William Morgan

Josep Lluís Sert was an important influence on American architectural education by virtue of his position as dean at Harvard during the 1950s and '60s. Noted for his museums in Europe, masterplans for several South American cities, and his significant projects on American urban campuses, Sert was the recipient of the AIA Gold Medal. One of his most notable achievements was not his work at all: he was largely responsible for bringing Le Corbusier and the Carpenter Center to Cambridge.

As a devoted protégé of the master, Sert designed some of the most unapologetically Corbusian mega-structures around: Holyoke Center, Peabody Terrace, and the Science Center at Harvard, as well as Boston University's Central Campus. Whether one sees these exercises in Franco-Brazilian Brutalism as monuments of heroic Modernism or quaint period pieces, it is difficult to ignore them or their creator.

Surely, Sert deserves a solid, critical, and well-illustrated monograph — *in English*. There are no non-European books on him; Josep Maria Rovira's *Sert 1901-1983* (Electa, Milan) may be the best recent study, but it costs $135. Thus, we should welcome a $15 book on Sert from Rockport Publishers.

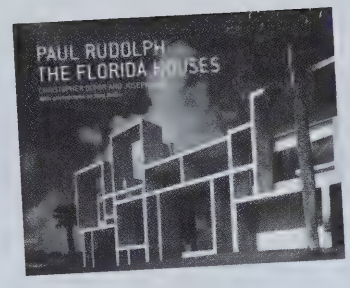
Josep Lluís Sert is the second of a new series called "American Architects" (the other is *Gwathmey & Siegel* [sic]). Alas, it is a thin, slapdash picture book, apparently a reprint from Madrid's Onlybook. The level of information presented is absurdly elementary, although most children's books are better designed and more fun. This looks like the sort of presentation volume that a provincial city might distribute to groups of visiting Japanese firemen.

Since the book has no introduction, no focus, and no author (there is a text credit hidden in the publication credits page), one can only guess its purpose. *Sert* covers the projects at Harvard and Boston University; three cultural buildings (Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona, and Miró's studio in Palma de Mallorca), and some houses in Ibiza. Also included are a short chronology, location maps (Holyoke Center is placed half a mile north of and the Science Center a block away from their actual locations), a wee bibliography, and a mini thank-you to Sert's partner Huson Jackson.

The un-credited color photographs are quite good, but the text is painful to read. Translations are often stiff and awkward (as dean at Harvard, Sert was "substituting Walter Gropius"), and every sentence borders on the dreadful ("The treatment of indirect lighting is effected largely by the way of the large skylights"). No one's native tongue should have to wrap around bland, inane, and meaningless statements such as "The perpendicular law and matching education dominate the whole."

Cambridge readers of Sert may be perplexed to learn that Harvard's Science Center "was designed to allow for quick dismantling." Readers of contemporary architectural literature will be perplexed by Rockport's diversion from handsome and useful monographs to dreck.

William Morgan is an architecture critic in Providence, Rhode Island.



Paul Rudolph: The Florida Houses

by Christopher Domin and Joseph King;
photographs by Ezra Stoller
Princeton Architectural Press, 2002

Reviewed by
Robert J. Taylor AIA

In 1953 Paul Rudolph, then 35 years old, was "the most important architect…in the US and probably the industrialized world" according to critic Peter Blake. This acclaim began with small vacation homes, the subject of a handsome new volume, *Paul Rudolph: The Florida Houses*. Rudolph went on to prestigious commissions, many near Boston, that eclipsed the houses: the Jewett Arts Center at Wellesley; Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute near South Dartmouth; and the Art and Architecture Building at Yale, where he became chairman of the architecture department. *The Florida Houses* offers fresh reconsideration of Rudolph's early — and arguably best — work, covering 60 projects from 1941, the year he arrived in Sarasota, to his 1962 departure for the Northeast.

The authors let the houses speak for themselves through Rudolph's drawings and Ezra Stoller's photographs. The drawings portray the architecture with remarkable clarity, in roof-removed aerials that favor massing and cut-away perspectives with low points-of-view that favor the section. Rudolph's magazine-ready graphics boosted his career in an image-hungry system and still print beautifully.

Architect and educator, Rudolph was foremost a *maker*, and superb buildings of simplicity, rigor, and lightness grace this book. Stoller's beautiful black-and-white photos empathically portray Rudolph's architecture in harmony with the mangrove swamps, tropical light, and easy living of mid-century Sarasota.

Two essays organize Rudolph's houses into two periods during which he explored escape paths from Modernist ideology. First, Domin covers Rudolph's work with architect/builder Ralph Twitchell, a partnership that lasted until 1951. Promoting Modern design ideas to Twitchell's open-minded Sarasota friends, they developed a sub-tropical American Modern architecture in which simple volumes on daring structural armatures catch breezes and provide shade with operable flaps and filigree layers. During this period, Rudolph spent two formative semesters studying under Gropius at Harvard, in breaks from his training as a naval architect during the war years. In these first houses, remarkable for their small size and big ideas, shipwright economy and carpentry transform influences from Gropius, Mies, and Wright.

King covers Rudolph's independent practice from 1952 to 1962, in which his work evolved toward dramatic monumentality, deep shadow, and internal spatial complexity. Though highly influential, it was less regional, less Southern, and certainly a more difficult way to make a house. Interesting premonitions, these later houses outline ideas Rudolph went on to develop in subsequent significant commissions.

Rudolph has long been remembered for overheating like Icarus and falling into a sea of bad luck through the 1970s. His overreach at the ill-fated State Services Building, fires at the Yale Art and Architecture building, Robert Venturi's withering critique of the Crawford Manor housing project in New Haven — each damned his "heroic and original" Modernism. *The Florida Houses* reminds us why Rudolph rose so rapidly and flew so high.

Robert J. Taylor AIA is a principal of Taylor & Burns in Boston.

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Web sites of note

Maison Dom-Ino Construction Kit
http://home.earthlink.net/~supkoff/dom-ino-ring/main.htm
Fans of Le Corbusier, take heart! Here's an electronic time-waster far more satisfying than Free Cell and Solitaire. Build your own on-screen Maison Dom-Ino. Like Legos, but without the need to return all the pieces to your toy box.

DOCOMOMO
www.docomomo-us.org
"The acronym DOCOMOMO stands for DOcumentation and COnservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the MOdern MOvement." An international organization, it has active chapters in the US. Find the one near you. The Modernist building you save may be your own.

Housing Prototypes
www.housingprototypes.org
"Dedicated to the study of international multi-family housing." This is a handy database of housing around the world, listed by place, architects, and building type. It's straightforward and astonishingly useful.

The Collegiate Way
www.collegiateway.org
This site at first seems to have the unfortunate character of an Internet rant, until you realize that its author might be on to something: "The real crisis in higher education today doesn't come from the curriculum, it comes from the poverty of student life." The solution? The residential college.

Boston's Skyscraper Guy
www.skyscraperguy.com
Quirky but endearing, this site is devoted to Boston's tall buildings. ("So, why Boston? You guessed it; it's the closest city to me. It's all I've got to work with right now.") The Skyscraper Guy seems to have lots of friends – over 100 registered users of the discussion forum where people regularly post pictures of buildings and proceed to talk about them in a civilized manner. See? People care about this stuff.

RiverNet
www.rivernet.org
A multi-disciplinary, multi-national site promoting "the sustainable wise management of living rivers in opposition to the exploitation, pollution, and degradation that has occurred in the past."

Urban Rivers Awareness
www.urbanrivers.org
Great domain name with unfortunately dumbed-down contents. (You probably knew that only a fraction of the Earth's water is fresh, not salt.) But the links list is a useful resource.

Nostalgia Central
www.nostalgiacentral.com
Your guide to the '60s, '70s, and '80s. To understand the architecture of the recent past, you need to understand its cultural context, right?

We're always looking for intriguing Web sites, however uncertain the connection to architecture. Send your candidates to: epadjen@architects.org

Other Voices by Edward Young

Peabody Terrace

photo: Edward Young

I used to think that living in a concrete tower block would be terrible, that it would signify some gross lapse of taste, erode my soul, and detach me — uproot me from the warm life of the street and the rooted history of an old house.

By nature, the old me would have also sided with the residents of Cambridge who have still to forgive Harvard for the eyesore they argue blights the traditional Charles River skyline, upsetting the balance of elegant red-brick dorms and their own pretty pastel-shaded wooden New England homes. As a child living in rural England, I imagined living in a red-brick terraced house — one of the rowhouses that define so many London neighborhoods. One day, I thought, I might trade up to Early Georgian. If I were American, I would have imagined living in a slate-gray clapboard house with a porch and contrasting white trim.

But life in Peabody Terrace has been an unexpectedly pleasant surprise.

On a bitterly cold February day, I picked up the keys to the apartment I would share with my partner, a Harvard graduate student. I had never envisioned living in a concrete high-rise, but now here I was moving into Peabody Terrace. The closest I had got to becoming a modernist was to envy the wall-to-wall carpeting and stripped pine of my cousins' 1980s suburban semi-detached. (It at least seemed better than the buckled walls, thatch dust, and mismatched colours of my parents' cottage.) At school we learned about the social dislocation caused by Britain's post-war government's attempt to re-house the poor in brave new concrete tower blocks. The message was clear: high-rise housing bred drugs, crime, and delinquency. It was a message that was reinforced when I worked in the housing office at Blackbird Leyes, one of Britain's worst housing projects. Tower after tower of wet, stained concrete housed thousands of sallow, depressed workers.

"It looks like the projects," said a friend visiting me for the first time at Peabody Terrace. At a distance — the distance most Cambridge residents see it from — there is no denying the resemblance. But up close, things come into sharper focus. The colours are bright — the walls white, the window shutters and doors painted in strong reds and greens. And what is absent is important, too: Peabody Terrace is absent of litter, absent of abandoned cars, absent of graffiti. The lifts don't smell of urine. There is a certain sense of pride and privilege among the residents, to be allowed to live in such an attractive place, in such simple, pleasant apartments.

Peabody Terrace is a 24-hour community with residents from every corner of the world — a rich Babel of languages and cultures. The graduate students and their families who populate Peabody Terrace set their own schedules, coming and going throughout the day and night. Many students work at home or within walking distance, taking breaks to exercise or shop during the day. The kindergarten attracts children from across the area. It is a young, vital community, a vibrant, colourful mix.

Until recently I lived in Beijing. The city is undergoing a perpetual building revolution, its winding alleyways — the *hutongs* — bulldozed to make way for shopping malls and new office buildings. But local residents are not upset; they do not bemoan the loss of history. They are excited about the prospect of central heating and flush toilets. They are optimistic about the future, optimistic about their new homes on the outskirts of the city, optimistic about living in concrete tower blocks. I lived for two years in an old courtyard house a stone's throw from the Forbidden City. I had hankered after history; I hoped to be nourished by the courtyard's historical meaning, tied to the generations who had lived and loved there before me. But two bitter winters and two sweltering summers proved I needed to be nourished by more than historical meaning.

For me, Peabody Terrace strikes a balance. It is first and foremost a clean, well-lighted place for living. Floor-to-ceiling windows suck in what sunlight there is on a Boston winter day, the white walls and clean strong lines reflecting and magnifying the sun, bouncing it into the corners of the room. But its local infamy gives it historical depth — it is not just any concrete tower block.

Peabody Terrace may be an eyesore for local residents; it may sometimes feel to them like the projects have crash-landed in a neighborhood of chocolate-box clapboard homes. But for me it has laid to rest the cliché that all concrete tower blocks are soulless. Peabody Terrace has a soul. ■■■

Edward Young is currently a consultant at a marketing research firm in Boston. Until recently, he worked as a journalist in Beijing. He is a resident of Peabody Terrace.

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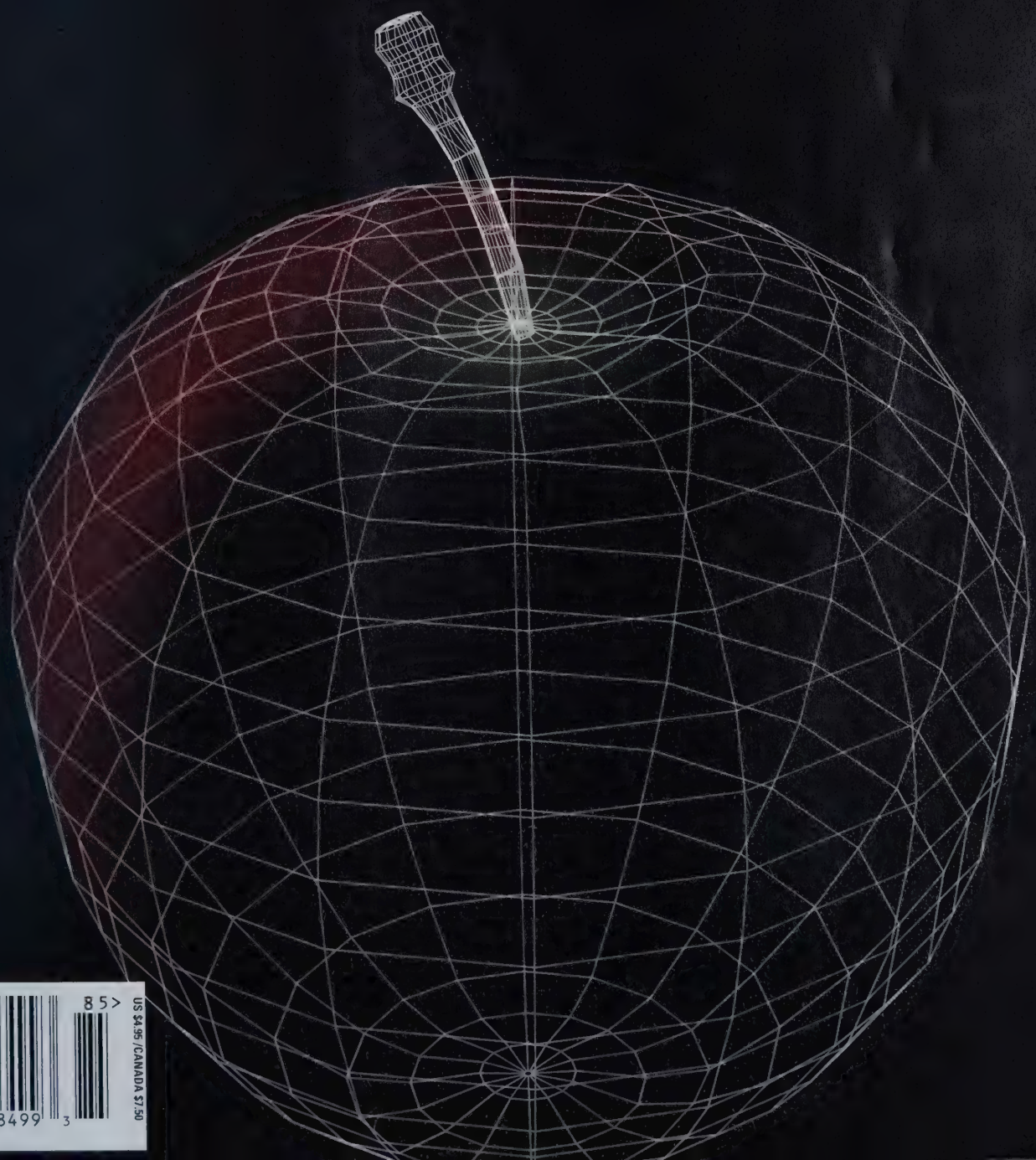

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ArchitectureBoston

September/October 2003

Education

I have a confession. For five years, I resisted doing this issue. "Education" regularly emerged on lists of possible themes, and just as regularly, I dodged and ducked it, usually by distracting our otherwise astute editorial board members with other tempting theme ideas. Why? I found most conversations about architectural education to be tiresome — the same old debates framed with the same old arguments, exciting passions only among the same old players.

Sometimes procrastination pays off. The world of architectural education has shifted, and the atmosphere has cleared. Whether that means that fresh air has blown through or only that a new synthetic has been sprayed over the old mustiness remains to be seen. But the signs are encouraging.

First, many schools have wrung out the excesses of theory that so often provoked both outrage and derision among practitioners only a decade ago. Theory seems to have found its place, lending a welcome intellectual grounding to the profession while coexisting far more comfortably with the practical and technical aspects of building. As several of our contributors note, many architects who were once known only for their "paper architecture" are now designing "real" buildings that force them to contend with the realities of codes, budgets, public review, materials, even leaks and liability. Academics themselves are questioning the wholesale appropriation of theoretical systems from other disciplines: the summer 2003 conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture was devoted to this very topic.

Another change can be seen in the students themselves. For whatever reasons — unthinkable tuitions and debt, the broad consumer culture, youthful idealism — students today are not the modest novitiates they once were. They are far more assertive, as demonstrated by the heightened visibility of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) and the emergence of ArchVoices (see page 39), the four-year old think-tank and website for architectural interns.

The profession, too, has changed, demonstrating greater leadership and invention in its approach to architectural education. Under the leadership of Boston architect Peter Steffian FAIA, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) recently established the NCARB Prize for Creative Integration of Practice and Education in the Academy. Local firms are demonstrating initiative, too, including Cambridge Seven, which has a formal internship program with Rice and a program for German architectural exchange students sponsored by the University of Michigan, and Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott, where the Design Fellowship program offers students greater exposure to design work and to the firm's principals than typical internships provide. Even more innovative is the Moshe Safdie and Associates Research Fellowship, which provides a one-year stipend to selected graduate students and young architects and offers designers the opportunity to do research in an office setting — thus moving the profession closer to the model of "teaching offices" that parallel teaching hospitals.

As the profession evolves, so will the schools. But the reverse has always been true, too. What is the real change in architectural education? Perhaps it's confidence — greater confidence among educators, students, and the schools themselves.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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Education
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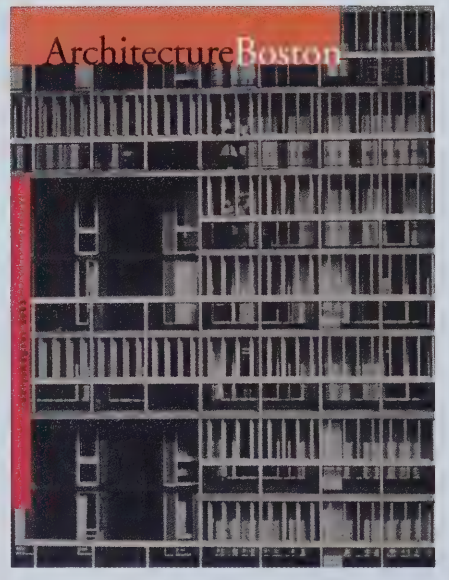
Letters



Your fine issue on Peabody Terrace [July/August 2003] nicely crystallizes the debate over our continuing need to understand what constitutes an appropriate contemporary response to the context of our city and region. Although not without its problems, a strong case can still be made that Modernism is the best thing that has happened to the Boston area in the last hundred years. Drawing upon a strong native progressive tradition and working with an enlightened local intelligentsia, architectural Modernists from Aalto to Sert and their like-minded colleagues in research and academia catalyzed a new synthesis that enabled 21st-century Boston — beginning the transformation of an academic enclave and its cultural hinterland into the cosmopolitan center that it has become today.

There has always been, however, a deep mistrust of the appearance of Modernism as something foreign and indifferent to the physical (and cultural, to some) realities of New England. In the same way that it is the idea of Peabody Terrace that so appeals to architects (as Lee Cott notes in "Why Architects Love Peabody Terrace"), it is precisely this idea — seen as representing an alien implant seeking to alter established patterns of living — that has fueled the hostility to Modernism outside the architectural community.

There is an irony in the underlying nostalgia that fuels your roundtable participants' celebration of the energy and spirit that brought Cambridge Modernism to its peak in the 1960s, for nostalgia is also at the foundation of much of the traditionalist argument against the hard logic of Modernity. However, memory can be a useful tool to revive and focus interest on important cultural issues that might otherwise be lost to history. Therefore, in acknowledging the significance of memory to both sides of our cultural debate, we can perhaps begin to use it intelligently, in open dialogue, to foster mutual understanding of these heretofore irreconcilable positions.

David N. Fixler AIA
President, DOCOMOMO/US — New England
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Boston

The roundtable discussion of Peabody Terrace ["Talking About a Revolution: Cambridge in the '60s," July/August 2003] recalled my earliest years in architecture. From the Midwest, the University of Chicago, and the Yale School of Architecture, I arrived in the Boston area and TAC in 1959, under the influence of Mies, Corbu, and Louis Kahn. The Custom House Tower identified the Financial District and the Prudential steel frame was rising in the Back Bay.

The Harvard Square architectural community was alive and full of ideals, creativity, and self-criticism, even into evenings at the Casablanca, after work on Fridays. As proposed designs and construction began to emerge along the Charles River (Harvard, MIT, BU), we all felt that we were achieving a 20th-century response to a changing city and culture, always respecting and appreciating, but not imitating the past. Working with Ben Thompson, in the later '60s, we included Peabody Terrace as influences in understanding the forms, materials, and details appropriate to "our age." As we developed three sites of elderly and subsidized housing for the Cambridge Housing Authority, we acknowledged community issues raised earlier, and even went high-rise on Gore Street.

The riverscape continues to change and the downtown grows higher, but I fear the search for the "right" has been lost in the pressure to be "accepted." Let us hope that reminders, such as your Peabody Terrace issue, will give our active and younger designers pause, and a new impetus to seek and achieve the earlier heights.

Thomas Green FAIA
Boston

We were delighted to see the July/August issue of *ArchitectureBoston* devoted to Peabody Terrace. As noted in the Editor's Letter, the "invention, clarity and social spirit that made Peabody Terrace a landmark in American architecture" has, by its very familiarity to two generations of Bostonians and Cantabridgians, made its innovative character less striking. The commentary and insight of your roundtable participants ["Talking About a Revolution: Cambridge in the '60s"] were informed and appealing antidotes to this perception. We think it significant as well that members of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians have selected Peabody Terrace as a "must see" on their forthcoming study tour of Modernist structures in the Boston area.

We are the organizers of the exhibition "Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953-1969," which will open on October 7, 2003 at the Harvard Design School. Peabody Terrace will be among the Sert commissions and projects highlighted, not only in the exhibition, but in the complementary symposium (October 26-27) organized by Hashim Sarkis of the GSD's Department of Urban Design. The exhibition and the symposium are open to the public and will, we hope, provide a fresh look at Sert's work as both a designer and an educator.

A companion exhibition, "Josep Lluís Sert: Architect to the Arts II" opens in mid-September at the Carpenter Center's Sert Gallery. Drawn from the collections of the GSD's Sert Archive and the Fogg Museum, this exhibition will offer a potentially revelatory insight into Sert's work, perhaps less familiar to local audiences. Beginning with the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic at the Paris International Exposition of 1937 (perhaps best known as the inaugural site for the exhibition of Picasso's "Guernica"), and including the Fondation Maeght in St.-Paul-de-Vence and Barcelona's Fundacio Miró, these commissions are expressive not only of architectural design but of Sert's long-established friendships and collaborations with a number of significant figures in 20th-century art. Paintings and sculpture from Sert's personal collection, with archival material, will be included in this exhibition.

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After reading with interest all the words about Peabody Terrace [July/August 2003], I am left with the opinion that if only architects like it and the public hates it, it is an architectural failure.

Who are architects designing for anyway? The praise of their colleagues or the people who live in and around their buildings?

Hugh Stubbins FAIA
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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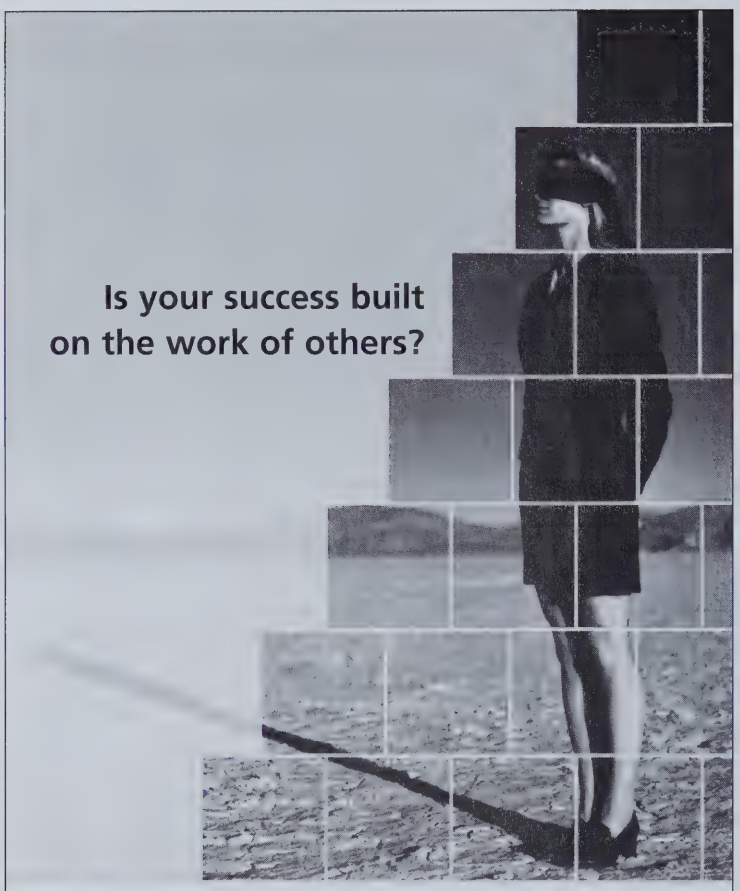

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Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Wellington Reiter AIA is the principal of Urban Instruments and was recently named dean of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Arizona State University. He has taught at MIT and Rhode Island School of Design.

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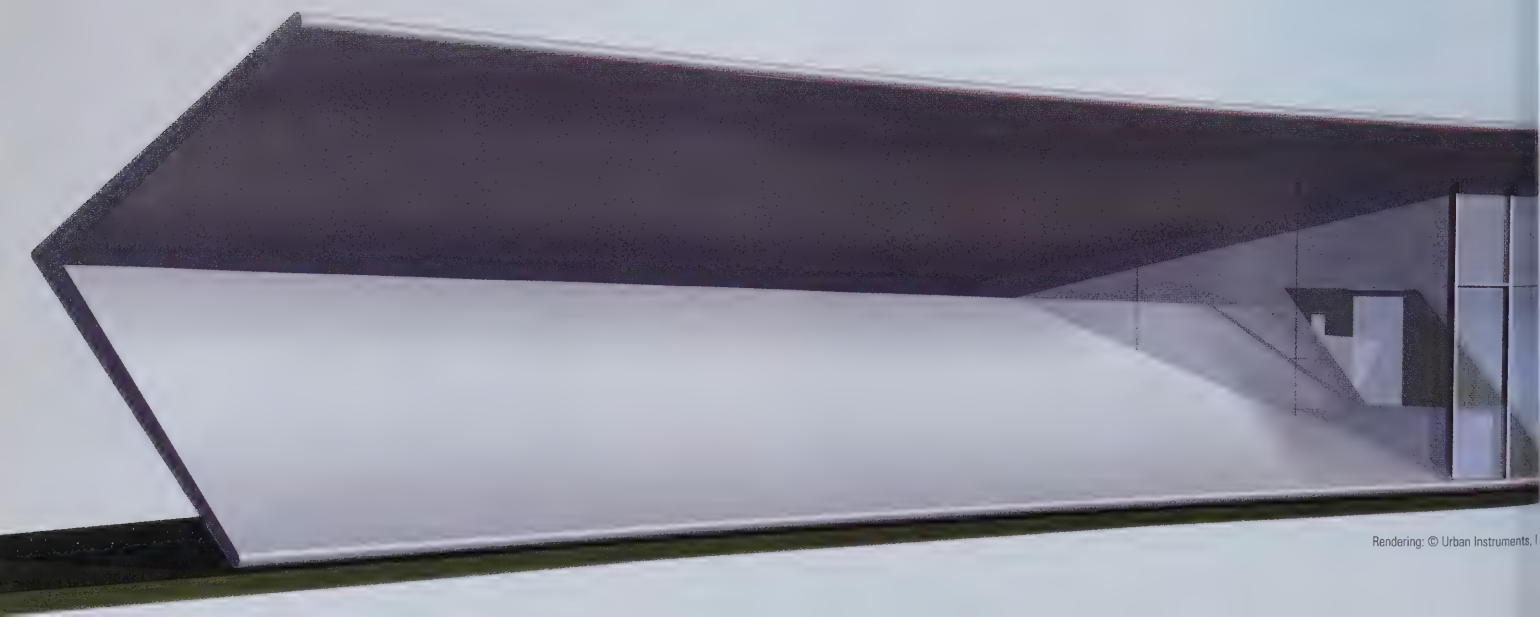

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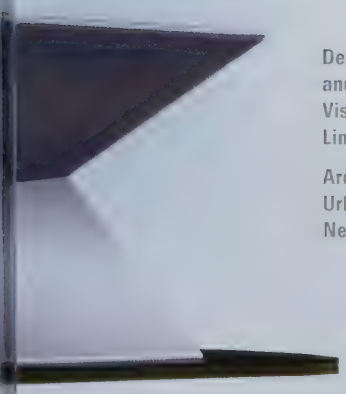
Elizabeth Padjen: Any discussion of architectural education risks retracing the same old arguments about practice versus theory, the profession versus academia. But there are signs that suggest that the same old battle isn't being fought anymore. Or that interest in fighting it is waning. What happens if we say, "The war is over"? Let someone declare victory and let's just go on from there and see what we've got. At the very least, it changes the language of the discussion in ways that could be quite interesting. Since you all have combined practicing and teaching throughout your careers, let's start with that basic premise and see if you agree with it

Brian Healy: I know I don't always pay attention, but to miss a whole war is kind of disturbing. I don't understand the premise that there was a war let alone a major disagreement. It seems to me that teaching and practice have always been linked. The idea that they would be in conflict to the point of calling it a war is something I don't understand.

Andrea Leers: But there was a period in the '80s in which a neglected area of theory came back into curricula in a very strong way. Along with this was the notion that somehow there were architects who were "proper" academics and theoreticians, and that they were different from architects who were building and designing. Not coincidentally, this was also the period when tenure, which architecture schools had mostly abandoned, came back into the schools. All of this contributed to a debate between practice and teaching that was pretty contentious for a while. I think that has passed. Many of those same people who saw themselves mainly as theoreticians — from Peter Eisenman to Jorge Silvetti — really wanted to build and did.



DeCordova Museum
and Sculpture Park
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Architect:
Urban Instruments
Newton, Massachusetts

Peter Wiederspahn: I think the surge of theory that you are talking about was a desire for validation — for architecture to validate itself in the academy just as other disciplines were validating themselves through scholarship — the rise of literary criticism, for example. That strategy was faulty in that instead of trying to find an analogy to what the other disciplines were doing, we looked directly at the other disciplines and appropriated their language. The surge of theory was healthy in one respect, because we started talking about the ideas that underlie architecture and a new kind of culture emerged within the education of the architect that moved beyond just the pragmatics of building. On the other hand, there was something suspect about some of the specific references that people were looking at. I'm optimistic. I think in the last five years or so we've come to a comfortable spot on the sine curve between the extremes of ideas-for-ideas'-sake and the postwar focus on technique.

Brian Healy: I wonder if that overlaps with the idea that some of the proponents of theory are now trying to apply their lessons to the real world. Theory becomes far more conservative when you have to deal with the reality of how materials go together. And there are very few people today who would stand up proudly and say they have no intention of building. The discussions about how you construct something are much more common today than they were 10 years ago, when people would look at you askance if you brought up such things. So maybe I missed the war, but I've certainly been exposed to the disconnections between the camps.

Kyna Leski: On the one hand, the idea of a war between theory and practice strikes me as a false dichotomy, but on the other hand, the language is very familiar. John Hejduk was my teacher during the '80s at Cooper Union, the so-called "paper architecture" school. I remember when Hejduk came back from a review at the GSD [Harvard Graduate School of Design]. He said, "It's a war! They are stepping on crocuses up there at Harvard. I'm declaring war — an all-out war!" The paper architects did look to the other arts and disciplines as Peter said. But I don't think that Hejduk did this in order to validate or bring scholarship to his architectural ideas. Hejduk dedicated his life to fighting a soulessness that he saw in built architecture. And one of the ways he did this was through feasting on other arts and disciplines. When I went to the Hejduk show at the Whitney Museum, his friend and my

teacher, the poet David Shapiro, was there. His first question to me was, "Are you building?" Neither Heyduk nor Shapiro was against building, but against the soul-selling that's part of the practice of building. Other teachers I had at Cooper were Rick Scofidio, Elizabeth Diller, Bernard Tschumi, and Raimund Abraham. A lot of those people who were paper architects then are now building.

Wellington Reiter: I agree with Andrea's recollection, because that was my experience at the GSD. I must say I have a great admiration for those folks who had sort of a big-bang theory about architectural practice — which was to speculate for a considerable amount of time and build very little and then explode onto the scene with a monumental project. Libeskind is perhaps the most dramatic example, sequestering himself up at Cranbrook just drawing and thinking and then the first thing that comes out of that process is his museum in Berlin. That is pretty remarkable. That is not the standard way to build a career and it is certainly not the AIA-sanctioned route. It's a high-risk strategy, but when the completely unbuildable somehow becomes tangible, there's a lot of interest in it. It's clear that things have shifted, that building has become a measure, and that it gives teachers a kind of currency. But I am not sure that I would agree that we are at a comfortable spot now. I see what I would call the current fetishization of new materials as being a major distraction. I wonder if the theory of the '80s has been replaced by a false sense of building and of working with real stuff. I really do believe there is something not quite right going on. It's another way for architecture students and teachers to distract themselves from the really nasty stuff out there in the world that you have to deal with in order to have any impact.

Brian Healy: I agree with you — there is something about this obsession with materiality that has the glaze of practice but isn't really about practice — how something is actually built or financed or fabricated. But teaching still informs practice and practice informs education. Being an educator and being a practitioner both require a lot of time to understand and master. I decided to work for 10 years before teaching. I always thought it was silly when people graduated and then turned around and started instructing — as if they'd actually acquired anything beyond the preconceptions of their teachers.

Trinity College
Zachs Hillel House
Hartford, Connecticut

Architect:
Leers Weinzapfel Associates
Boston

Photo. © Peter Aaron/Esto

Mixed-income housing
Chicago

Architect:
Brian Healy Architects
Boston

Rendering: © Brian Healy Architects

Wellington Reiter: You bring up a real issue — how long it takes to learn how to do any of this well. I think we can all agree that to achieve not just confidence but also skill as builders and as thinkers takes the accumulation of years. You can't speed that up. I know that I graduated with significantly less aptitude than I have now. A whole lot continues to happen after you leave school.

Meejin Yoon: We were talking about the academics who invested 10 or 15 years in a kind of paper architecture and then began to practice. However, it would be interesting to speculate on whether the reverse is happening. Are a lot of practitioners now returning to academia? This discussion cannot be separated from economics. Many theoretical "paper" architects were involved in their design research in a non-building capacity because there was little opportunity to build. As those things begin to shift — as we continue through another economic dip — maybe more people will turn toward theoretical practices. Most of my undergraduate professors were post-practitioners — they had practiced, built some important buildings, and were quite mature in their careers. My graduate experience was at the GSD in the mid-'90s, where the visiting critics were all practitioners. I thought my internship after school would focus on the pragmatics of building, but it was a continued education with a focus on design ideas.

Peter Wiederspahn: Northeastern has a co-op program — students have to land a job and practice for a year and a half while they're in school. I think that many people see it as a danger — that we are introducing people too early to the pragmatic side of education. But we tend to have more trust or optimism in the experiences that the students get. Boston is an ideal place for this kind of program because there are so many good design firms here, and we are also able to include in the design studios a plethora of voices — the community groups, politicians, and other professions that have an inevitable impact on what we produce as architects.

Elizabeth Padjen: It seems to me that Northeastern students are to some degree self-selecting — they already see the value of that combined approach when they arrive on your doorstep. Schools of architecture define the image of the profession for the students, and in turn, the faculty define the image of the institution. I wonder what students are expecting when they arrive. What is their image of the profession? And what are they encountering when they leave that is so different that accounts for the frustration and the dropouts?

Andrea Leers: We are sitting here as teachers and practitioners as though we are in charge of things. But frankly, it is our students' hopes and expectations and what they desire to learn that really color and shape the educational process and, later, the working process. I am always struck by the fact that no matter what the faculty thinks, the students come in as a body with an interest in certain things they've read about, heard about, or seen. In the past 10 years, students have come wanting to try out ideas that are highly imaginative and to find out how to realize them. And that is a change since the late '80s.

Elizabeth Padjen: Students at that point would have come in with more interest in pure theory?

Andrea Leers: Yes, or perhaps purely personal, formal explorations. I remember sitting with Rafael Moneo during a review at Harvard at the time when I was teaching at Yale. He was scratching his head, puzzled by the formal similarity of the projects, and he said, "Do you think it's in the water? What do you think?" I said, "I don't know what to tell you, Rafael, but it looks the same at Yale." All the projects on the walls that year had a common idea — they were all 400-foot long walls. I guess what I am saying is that students come in with their minds full of things they want to study. And they are usually in advance of the curriculum.

Wellington Reiter: Students are now definitely more educated and insightful consumers, and in some cases, very demanding consumers. I have also served as the professional advisor for the Career Discovery Program at the GSD which gives you a window on precisely what potential students are all about. And that window has gotten bigger to include a lot of mid-career professionals — people in their 30s, 40s and beyond — finishing up with careers in investment banking who now want to take a crack at architecture. Those individuals come with a very clear vision of what it is to be a professional, but at the same time they come because they know they are going to be in a studio situation for six weeks. And the studio experience really skims off the cream of what architects do.

33 Restaurant and Lounge
Boston

Architect:
3SIXO
Kyna Leski and Chris Bardt
Providence, Rhode Island

Photo: © John Horner

I want them to see the full spectrum of possibilities. Nevertheless, Career Discovery is built around studio. Schools are built around studio. I think that's interesting, but I am not sure it's the only way.

Brian Healy: The aspiration of most students is straightforward. I have never met anyone who went into architecture who didn't think it would be a great way to spend a life and improve the way the world works.

Meejin Yoon: A prevalent comment when I was in architecture school was that an architectural education was a good education whether you became an architect or not. And for a lot of my classmates, the goal was simply to get an architectural education.

Brian Healy: I don't know if students still aspire to have their own practice to the extent that they used to. While I suspect that Meejin's observations are probably accurate, my experience is that students have much more diverse expectations of what they will do with their education and their lives. If only 50 percent of young architects are taking their registration exams and getting licensed, how does that change the culture for interns? It may be that a lot of them don't aspire to have their own office any more.

Wellington Reiter: I was thinking the opposite.

Meejin Yoon: Me, too. When I applied to firms after graduate school, my most important criterion was that the principal of the firm both taught and practiced. I think that was why I had a really positive internship experience — it was a continuation of my architectural education. I think more and more students are seeking out these kinds of firms for their internship. My sense is that they would prefer not to work for firms that are solely production-oriented, but are looking for the firms that will extend their architectural education and continue to push their design exploration.

Kyna Leski: Interns today feel that the possibility of realizing something is closer, more within their grasp — much more so than when I was an intern. They see internship as not just building something with your hands and getting your hands on the materials, but also knowing everything that is involved in having a practice. It's precisely because they believe that someday they can have their own practice. When I was a student, we were plugged into much larger, more powerful organizations that could never possibly be our own.

Peter Wiederspahn: Maybe Brian's earlier observation that 50 percent of graduates aren't getting their license has to do with the desire to hang out the shingle. Perhaps the 50 percent who do pursue registration want their own practices. The other 50 percent perhaps are people who are content in large firms or aren't even going to stay in architecture. They are going to go into web design or graphic design or construction management.

Elizabeth Padjen: At the same time, I have the sense that some of those people not taking the exam are either put off by the exam — the cost and the lack of supportive structures for preparing for it — or are inventing other ways to practice. People are forming fluid collaborations around competitions or projects that might not be pure architecture in the traditional sense.

Wellington Reiter: I don't think you can stress enough what the dot-com era at the end of the '90s did to cause everyone to think entrepreneurially across disciplines. There was a point around 1998 or 1999 when, if you didn't have a business plan in your pocket, you were really out of it. What young architects learned was not to work for a big firm, but to get out there and build a business.

Andrea Leers: Taking the long view, I don't know that there is a big change in the numbers of people who study architecture and then want to go and create their own practice. There have always been a lot of people who do that. I haven't known anybody who aspired to go right to a big firm like SOM. What is different is that, partly through the technical means that are now available and partly because we have come through the '90s at an entrepreneurial time, people are willing to reconceive how they want to practice. I think it is the nature of the new practices that is different, not the number or the desire.

Brian Healy: And it is interesting that many people start practices with an eye on trying to keep a foot in academia. But it's a tough strategy to follow. It is very rare to find a young educator who has a thriving practice, because most would choose to focus on their practice at that point. So they start in education and they try to practice and they do small projects like renovations or additions and build up a practice from there.

Meejin Yoon: It seems that educational institutions now have a real desire to hire people who are committed to practice. I think there was a period when schools hired a lot of young faculty members because they were trained in digital technology. A lot of schools needed people to teach things that senior faculty did not have exposure to and could not teach. But I think right now there are more opportunities to teach for younger architects who are practicing — there seems to be a desire to hire young.

Kyna Leski: It depends on the school. It has to do with the make-up of the existing faculty, which needs to be counterbalanced by the next hires. It can be quite complex.

Brian Healy: There is pressure to be a practitioner — I don't know any educator who doesn't claim to be a practitioner as well. But it is impolite to ask how active the practice actually is.

Meejin Yoon: But has that pressure been consistent over the last 25 years or is this increasing pressure for all educators to practice something new?

Brian Healy: Looking back over the 12 years of my teaching career, I'd have to say people are far more interested in the translation of ideas into built form than they used to be.

Wellington Reiter: And does all of this assumed new interest in building mean that as a group we are actually more effective as teachers than we were before, when the schools were more engaged in theory? Then there really was a disjunction between theory and practice. If we now have a supposed interest in the engagement of those ideas with built form, are we collectively becoming more effective in shaping the larger built environment?

Andrea Leers: Not necessarily.

Wellington Reiter: I agree. I would say we just have more one- and two-person practices, because we have more people who want to go into practice earlier. I wonder if we aren't getting lost in the woodwork once again. We've turned a corner, and we are now in a different area where the focus is on practice and fabrication. But one could make a claim that what we have now is a larger collection of boutique firms out there serving a very small sliver of the population. And I wonder if that coincides with the disengagement from larger urban, economic, and ecological issues.

Photo: © Robert O'Connor

Home/work space
Wiederspahn Studio
Somerville, Massachusetts

Architect:
Wiederspahn Architecture
Somerville, Massachusetts

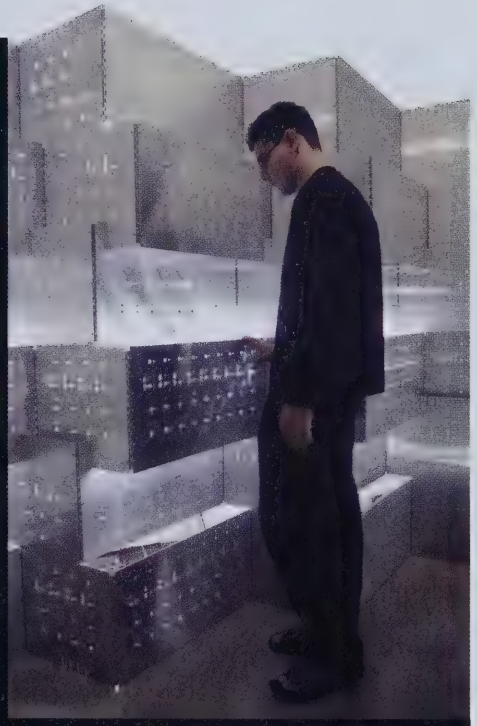

Photo courtesy Meejin Yoon

Interactive pleated wall
New York City

Architect:
J. Meejin Yoon
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Kyna Leski: We talk about wanting to build, how exciting it is. But there is an art to teaching that we haven't talked about. Some of the best teachers at RISD practice only minimally.

Elizabeth Padjen: Let's talk a bit about that and the culture of the schools. How do they nurture good teachers? Do they try? If we assume it is a good thing to have people who are teaching and practicing in a seamless kind of way, we then have to think about the plight of junior faculty. And the plight of junior faculty is that they want to establish practices but can't because they have teaching loads and committee loads. My sense from this discussion is that the schools seem to be charmed by the notion of having younger faculty members with younger firms that balance out some of the older, more established faculty members. But how do they make that work?

Meejin Yoon: I agree with Brian's comment that to start both your teaching career and your practice simultaneously is insanely difficult. I had intended to work for 10 years before even thinking about teaching, but it just didn't work out that way. But as much as junior faculty feel that pressure and as exceedingly difficult as it may be, it is really exciting. I couldn't give up one right now — I would rather struggle and build them both up slowly than give up one and focus on the other.

Brian Healy: That's right. What happens at the intersection of education and architecture and design is intoxicating. Some people think they'll cross over from one to the other late in their careers, or after they retire. But sometimes the best teachers are the ones who have very small practices and as they get older, they realize that teaching is their primary strength.

Peter Wiederspahn: I think there is a strategy for people who are interested in doing both. Academia provides a kind of cushion that allows you to accept only the work that you want. You are not supporting a practice. You don't have to take on every project to pay the bills and hope that some are going to provide interesting design opportunities. It's a symbiotic relationship — or at least, I choose to make it symbiotic. The practice informs the education and vice versa. But it can be a very hard sell for young faculty in a university if they are trying to build a tenure case, because universities understand scholarship and that is their measuring stick.

Wellington Reiter: If there was ever a discipline where the tenure clock doesn't make any sense, it is architecture. It is illogical, and it forces young faculty to pursue the big-bang approach to architecture, trying to win a competition out of nowhere. If you have a salary, you have the ability to pursue competitions. But it makes it hard to build a practice in a more thoughtful and deliberate way. I haven't seen an architecture school yet that benefits from tenure.

Meejin Yoon: I would like to build upon Kyna's point. We are part of a profession of education. And what is missing in the tenure process is the idea of teaching. If we have a profession of education then the main focus for a young teacher, in my opinion, should be on better teaching. The tenure process has very little to do with your ability to contribute to someone's education and has more to do with professional standing.

Wellington Reiter: Teaching architecture is actually remarkable when you think about it. In what other walk of life, would you be given a job and a contract and a timetable and a place to do your work — meaning to teach — but the primary determinant as to whether you will be kept on has to do with your ability to run a separate business on the side? It is extraordinary. The professional standing that you try to gain through building is about criteria that have nothing to with teaching.

Andrea Leers: Yes, but medical, law, and business schools share that, too. It's a core aspect of a professional school. I think one of the hardest things we all face — and I know I have tremendous respect for people who do it better than I do — is being a good teacher as well as being a good architect. That is rare. I know a lot of wonderful designers who can't teach. I know a lot of wonderful teachers who do not build, could not build. I think that the skills that it takes to do both really well are very rare.

Elizabeth Padjen: Let's talk more from the point of view of the students. I'm intrigued by the question of what makes a good teacher. And how do you know if you are a good teacher? Or how do you learn how to teach?

Meejin Yoon: I was always very puzzled by this. When I was hired for my first teaching position at the University of Toronto, I was given a four-course load including a 300-student introduction-to-architecture lecture course. I remember wondering how it was possible that somebody would trust me with such a responsibility. I always wondered whether there was a course I should take, like "How to Teach." People seem to assume that if you went through the education system, you should be prepared to teach. But I do think that it is very possible to measure your progress as a teacher via the progress of the student.

Brian Healy: It's reflected in the quality of the work produced by the student. It seems to me that you do know. For me, it is based on a sense of empathy. It's not about the instructor but about the student. And that may be the hardest thing to understand for a lot of architects who come in with 30 years of experience or the big name. They think it is about them. It is not. It is the student's classroom. It is the student's studio. And you can directly sense from the excitement, enthusiasm, development, and production of the student just how good a job you are doing as an educator.

Andrea Leers: Some good advice was given to me once about different ways of teaching — teaching by example, teaching by explication, and different ways of conveying information. What's important to be an effective teacher is to learn what your mode of teaching is, and to understand how to best convey what it is that you want to convey. And those people who aren't good at it fall away very quickly. In my experience, you learn what your voice is, what your strength is, and that what you can teach is what you care most passionately about. Then you learn through the experience of teaching many studios what produces effective learning. If you have been clear about your intentions for the learning experience, and the students want to learn that thing — it is not always a match — then you can measure how effective you have been. You can see it — students respond. And they are also very vocal.

Peter Wiederspahn: Architectural education, like the relationship with a client, is a reciprocal relationship. Architects often say great buildings require great clients — the clients push the architects to do better work and allow them to do better work. One of the great secrets of being an educator is the constant education that the educator goes through. The students actually push the professor almost as much as the professor pushes the students to gain new knowledge, to move into areas that are unknown territory. You develop a bond with the students. That is one of the great excitements for me about educating. It is not something the university can measure. And unlike most other disciplines in the university, you have a direct one-on-one contact with students on a constant basis. It is really a fantastic environment. And an enormous privilege.

■■■

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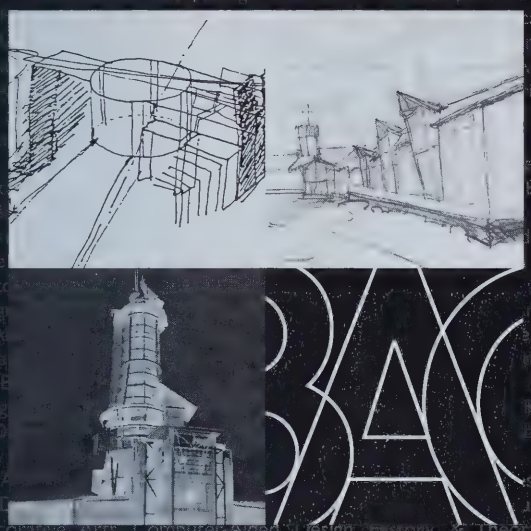

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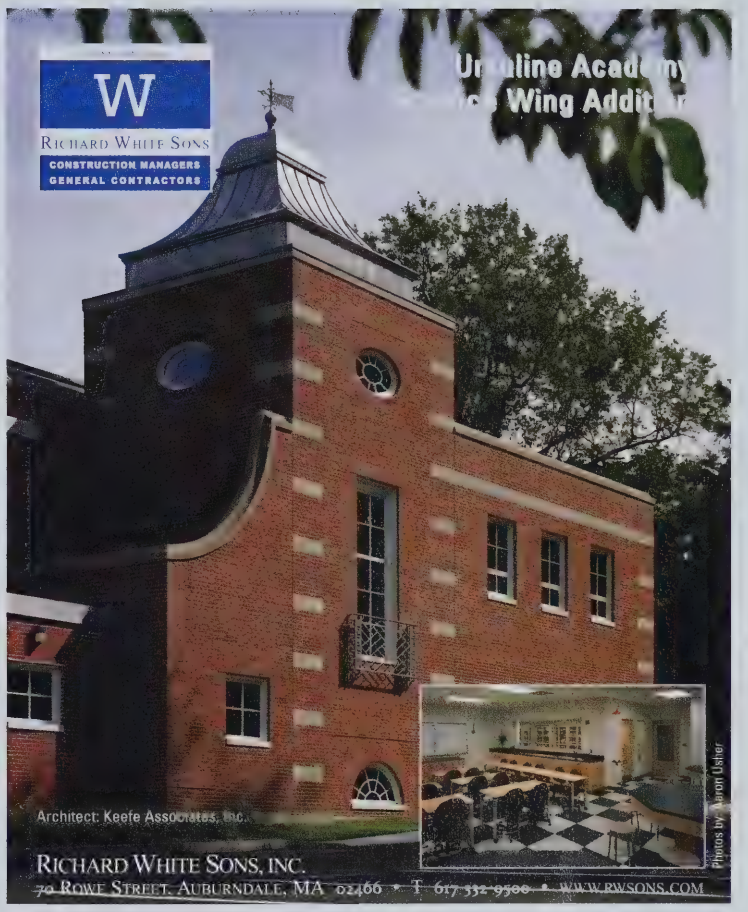

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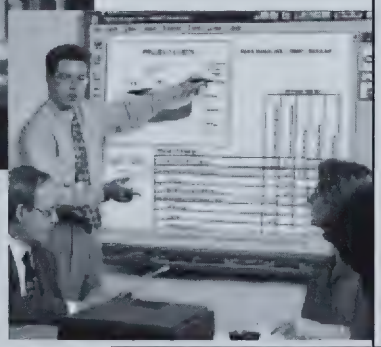

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A Delivery from the Assembly Line

by Kirin Joya Makker

Back and forth. On and on. The endless debate between the academy and practitioners concerning the purpose and character of architectural education in this country is a numbing enterprise at best, a cantankerous exchange at worst. In the midst of this ritual bonding with no amicable resolution in sight, few participants have paused to ask a basic question: what do the approximately 25,000 architecture students think of all of this?

As the past editor of *CRiT*, the journal of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS), I know that the profession is genuinely committed to improving architectural education. As a recent graduate, however, I share the concern of many students about the nature of this debate. We certainly understand (in this economy, perhaps even more than our elders), the necessity of academic preparation that will secure employment. But the very language of the debate is a cause for alarm — language that describes us in terms of products that are bought by architecture offices, language that rings of assembly-line capitalism. This, understandably, does not sit well with students, who find themselves in the peculiar situation of being simultaneously the products and the consumers of the education system.

Think about the language used in offices to describe student interns. An entry-level employee is typically assigned a position on the " production staff." Phrases like "CAD jockey" and "CAD monkey" were probably invented by interns themselves, but they reflect the speed and efficiency — uninterrupted by thoughtful pauses on the nature of one's work — that are the primary indicators of value. Some firms even call their "production" areas the "CAD pit," a term that conjures a Dickensian scene, dismal and deadening.

This language is born in the kind of chatter that is best described as light banter; it is meant to poke fun at our situation, using humor and self-deprecation to make us feel a little better about how we spend much of our time. But this language spreads among students and, unfortunately, it breeds fear among them.

As students approach graduation and the search for employment, their great worry is that they will become a commodity. Beyond the anxiety of simply finding a job, many students' worst fear is that they won't be valued for their creativity and imagination, abilities that they have just spent a great deal of time and money developing. "Students know that practitioners are accusing the academy of not preparing students and students worry about this," observes Larry Fabroni, 2002–2003 president of the AIAS. "But they also worry that the way the architecture profession practices is not capitalizing on what they've learned in school. How will they apply this creative, big-idea-driven design process to the real world?"

This cardinal fear most likely derives from the disconnect that students experience between their earlier ideals as applicants to architecture schools and the life they come to anticipate after graduation. My own informal survey of student motivations for pursuing a career in architecture reveals broadly shared experiences. At some point students become opinionated about the built environment; they want to participate in shaping it and perhaps improving it through what they have sensed is beautiful or effective architecture. They are interested in a career that offers opportunities to work creatively day to day but is not the life of an artist. (The public commonly views architecture as the union of art and science, creativity and order, and many of those applying to architecture school share these assumptions.) They like to draw or to craft or to build, either digitally or non-digitally. They want to be in a career that challenges their creative spirit, that might reward them for being imaginative.

These ideals are often considered romantic and fanciful because they reflect an ethic of aesthetic and social purpose. Yet these very ideals are the source of the energy and enthusiasm that instill a kind of pride and invincibility among architecture students, keeping them in school despite the sometimes detrimental effects of studio culture on their lives.

Unfortunately, some students find that architecture school stifles their creative energy; they steadily lose momentum. In fact, the majority of students I have talked to feel a dampening of their spirit as they approach graduation, regardless of the level of support from their schools and teachers. Quite simply, they believe practitioners will not offer them the life they thought their degree would yield. Thirty percent of my professional-practice class did not envision pursuing a traditional internship path in a firm. Is there a correlation between the people who give up on practice and the shrinking of opportunities to do what they want in firms? Is the profession losing some of its most broad-minded and idealistic contributors? Are we also losing creativity?

Students will always be disappointed when they feel their ideals have been compromised, and motivations and ideals inevitably shift with experience. But the profession can learn from its youngest, arguably most enthusiastic members. How would the old, tired theory-versus-practice debate stand up if the values shared by so many students were central to the profession?

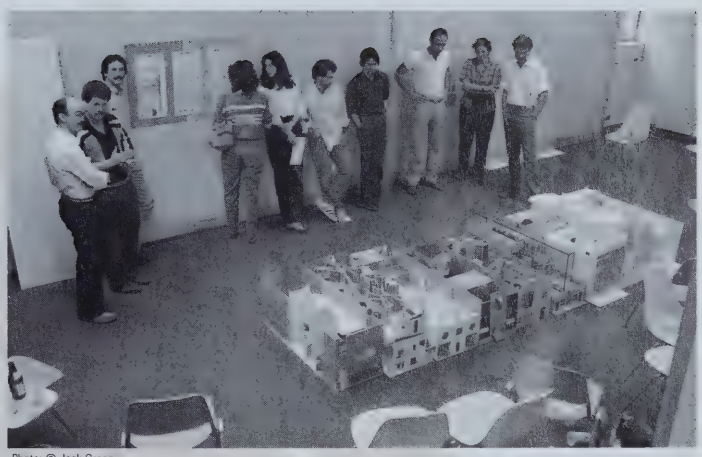

Photo: © Jack Green

Kirin Joya Makker was the 2001-03 editor of the AIAS publication *CRiT*. She graduated in December 2002 with an M.Arch. from the University of Maryland. She divides her time between Autocadding for architecture firms, teaching drawing, and freelance writing. She lives in Millers Falls, Massachusetts.

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Required Reading

An educational timeline

by Nathalie Westervelt

"[The Department of Architecture] is arranged to meet the needs of those who are commencing their professional studies, as well as of the experienced draughtsmen who desire to make up deficiencies in their training, or to qualify themselves for undertaking the responsibilities of practice."

Bulletin 1900

"It is believed undesirable, in fact dangerous, to spend much time upon the hampering limitations of ordinary practice before the student has acquired sufficient knowledge of the subject to discriminate between the general and the special case."

Bulletin 1915

Once there was no formal architectural education in this country. Prior to the Civil War, American architects, unless they studied abroad, learned by serving as apprentices to practicing architects, as was the tradition in England. No standards governed the requirements that led to the title "architect."

This deficiency was soon addressed by organizations such as the American Institute of Architects and the Boston Society of Architects and by the establishment of architecture programs in universities. By 1912, the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture was established and those education programs that wished to join were required to maintain its educational standards. Today we have the National Architectural Accrediting Board.

A useful case study in the history of architectural education is MIT, home of the first department of architecture in the United States. William Barton Rogers, a geologist and teacher at the University of Virginia, received a charter to open the school in 1861; the first students arrived in 1867, after the Civil War. At that time, the program was patterned after the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, which, as historian Spiro Kostof has noted, espoused the belief that "architecture is an Art" encompassing "universal principles that could be rationally perceived, expressed and taught." It was particularly appealing because it offered a theoretical approach to design as well as a relentless drive towards representational perfection.

These goals hold true in architectural education today, yet over the years, the responsibilities of the architect have expanded and contracted in response to changing social attitudes. This is most apparent in the changes in the MIT curriculum and in the "mission statements" in the *MIT Course Bulletin*, which reveal a progression from the practical to the theoretical, from the monumental to the societal, and from "stereotomy" (cutting solid volumes into various shapes) and water-color to computer rendering. Although the specific offerings have changed, the core disciplines have not: engineering; professional practice (including urban planning); representational skills; design; and history, theory, and criticism.

What follows is a selective timeline representing required courses in the MIT Department of Architecture.

1900

Engineering:

- Materials
- Heating and Ventilation
- General Statics
- Building Stones
- Strength of Materials
- Specifications and Working Drawings

Professional practice:

- Business Law
- Business Relations
- Principles of Public Health and Sanitation

Representational skills:

- Shades and Shadows
- Perspective
- Freehand Drawing
- Stereotomy
- Pen and Ink

Design:

- Elementary Design
- Design

History, theory and criticism:

- Ancient and Romanesque History
- Gothic and Renaissance Architecture
- History of Construction
- European Civilization and Art

1915

Engineering:

- Constructive Design I, II
- Heating and Ventilation
- Applied Mechanics I, II

Professional practice:

- Business Law
- Professional Relations
- Principles of Public Health and Sanitation

Representational skills:

- Freehand Drawing
- Perspective

Design:

- Elementary Design. Elements of Architecture
- Design and Theory of Architecture
- Design Thesis

History, theory and criticism:

- History of Ornament
- Architectural History
- European Civilization and Art

"The teaching of [Course IV Architecture and Course IVA Architectural Engineering] has steadily developed under the conviction that the ever-widening field of professional opportunity offered ample scope for each. It consequently has seemed fundamentally unsound to train students in one course with the impression that they were qualified to assume the obligations of the other."

Bulletin 1930

"... prerequisites for the study of architecture are sympathy for human institutions... esthetic perception, and the ability to utilize effectively the methods of science."

Bulletin 1960

"The School has no illusion that architects and planners by themselves can bring about a major transformation of the environment without substantial changes in society...

The architectural design curriculum for undergraduates and for graduate students provides a flexible framework for study which places responsibility on the students individually to define their own educational directions. There is no single core curriculum."

Bulletin 1975

1930

Engineering:

Building Construction
Construction Design
Structural Analysis
Structural Drawing
Structural Design

Professional practice:

Professional Relations
Office Practice
Estimating
Planning Principles
Town Planning

Representational skills:

Shades and Shadows
Perspective
Freehand Drawing
Graphics
Color Theory and Application
Modeling

Design:

Design

History, theory and criticism:

Architectural History
European Civilization and Art
Philosophy of Architecture
History of Renaissance Art
Theory of Architecture

1932

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning began in 1932. It was the second such department in the United States. The first was established at Harvard in 1925.

1945

Engineering:

Statics and Dynamics
Strength of Materials
Materials
Site Planning and Construction
Heating and Ventilation
Structural Analysis
Architectural Acoustics
Illumination

Professional practice:

Urban Sociology
City Planning and Principles
Sanitation
Land Economics
Building Economics

Representational skills:

Shop
Freehand Drawing
Freehand Drawing and Color

Design:

Architectural Design
Thesis Research

History, theory and criticism:

Architectural History

...and electives

1960

Engineering:

Architectural Form and Structure
Applied Mechanics
Structural Analysis
Heating and Ventilation
Materials: Masonry and Details
Materials: Wood, Plastics, Fabrics

Professional practice:

Structure of the City
City Planning Principles

Representational skills:

Graphical Processes
Basic Machine Drawing
Graphics Laboratory
Light and Color

Design:

Form and Design
Architectural Design
Thesis Research

History, theory and criticism:

Introduction to Art and Architecture
Modern Art and Architecture

...and electives

1967

The Center for Advanced Visual Studies was founded in 1967.

1975

There is no required core curriculum; offerings include:

Environmental Design III
Structural Design and Application
Synthesis of the Behavior of Structural Systems
Industrialization of Structural Systems
Special Problems in Building Technology
Introduction to Industrialization of Building
Seminar in Industrialization in Building
Project Organization and Control
Legal Regulation and the Building Process
The Construction of Buildings
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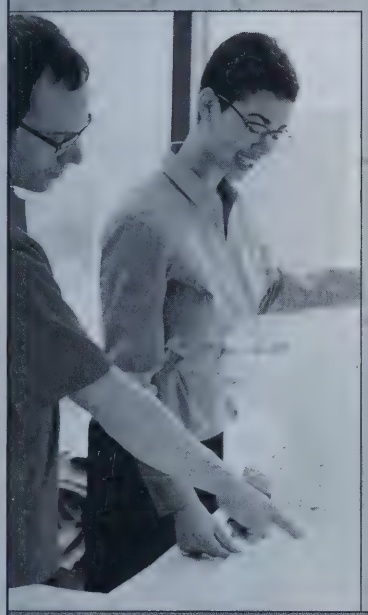

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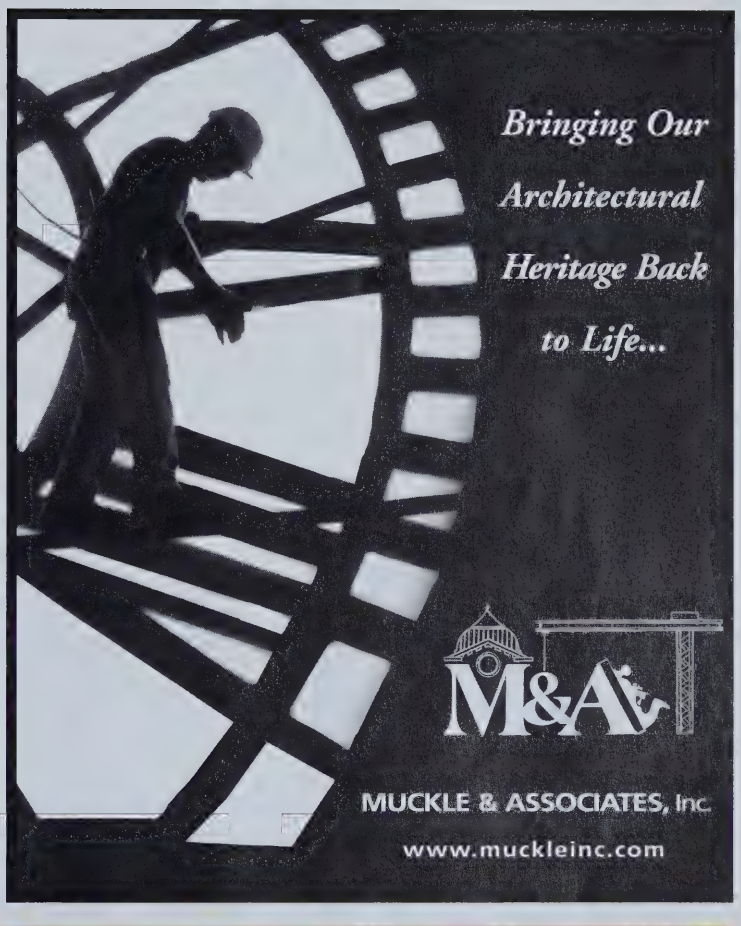

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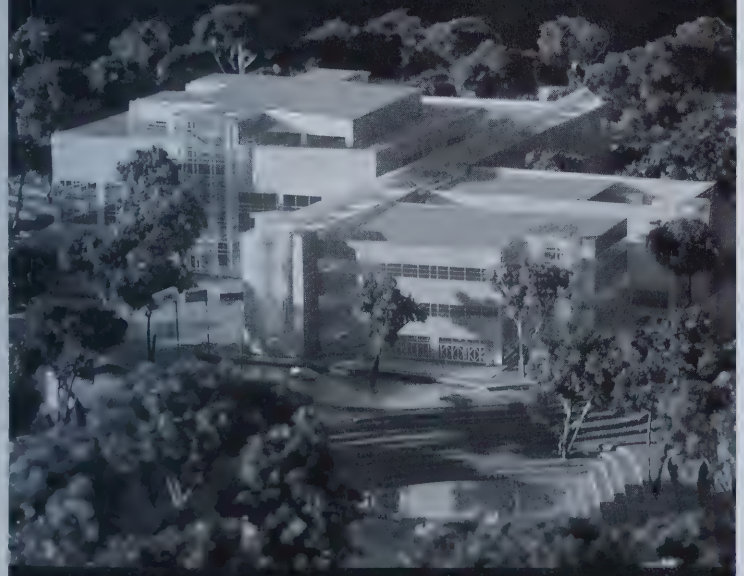

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Clio and the Education of Architects

by Eduard F. Sekler

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Among the nine Muses, those daughters of Memory, none deals with architecture. But among the many followers of Clio, the Muse of history, architecture appears early as a topic of concern. Accordingly the history of architecture can look back at origins in a distant past. For centuries, an understanding of history was taken for granted as being of paramount importance in the education of an architect. Today, however, it seems that architects in every generation must decide anew how to react to the wealth of material that architectural history has to offer. As a consequence, teachers of architectural history must decide in which direction their presentation should be oriented at a given moment in order to be of the greatest value to student architects.

If one asks distinguished architects which qualities they consider important for a successful architectural career, the replies are remarkably similar. What matters, they respond, is to be always on top of all relevant technical, cultural, and societal information and to have the capacity to recognize problems clearly in order to analyze them in such a manner that they become amenable to a solution. Further, the architect should have sufficient willpower, character, and perseverance to see a project through to its successful completion. And finally, the successful architect must possess that certain something that is summed up as "architectural talent" and described in such terms as "a good eye and a creative spatial and social imagination" or "an intuitive feeling for form and the ability to visualize three-dimensionally." One of the characteristics of architectural talent is also the capacity to "think architecturally," which, as the philosopher Jacques Derrida has noted, is not the same as thinking about architecture. "Architectural thinking" is comparable to the phenomenon Rudolf Arnheim has described as "visual thinking."

Among the qualifications mentioned above, only "architectural talent" is profession-specific. Its nurture and development has always received special attention in the education of architects. Consequently, the question for teachers of architectural history is narrowed down to defining the way in which their instruction can make a relevant contribution in support of architectural talent. Obviously the mere transmittal of information here is not enough. Rather, a selection, analysis, and interpretation of the

historic material is needed that takes cognizance of the chief interest of the students, i.e. design.

It is true that the study of architectural history may simply contribute to a higher level of general education, one that sharpens the awareness of individuals about their place in the process of continuous change around them and thus creates a stronger mindfulness of connections in time and place. But this broadest educational function of architectural history could be equally well performed by various other branches of historical study that are not focused on architecture.

By contrast, architectural history, when it serves a pedagogic goal, must focus on two closely linked pursuits directly related to the activity of making architecture: fostering the capacity to think architecturally and to generate architectural concepts, spaces, and forms; and acquiring criteria for the evaluation of fundamental theoretical assumptions.

Experience has shown how the actual or virtual confrontation of student architects with the built heritage of the past can become a source of lasting inspiration. But no virtual experience of an historic building can equal the powerful real experience of the same building's aura when it can be circumambulated, entered, touched, and smelled. On such occasions, unforgettable visual images, spatial experiences, and the discovery of fruitful architectural concepts can enrich a student's mental storehouse where they may remain effective even after they are no longer consciously remembered.

This explains why excursions to historic sites and buildings should be an integral part of coursework: students, guided by their teacher, can not only hone their capacity to sketch, but also test their skill in observing, describing, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating a building. All of which will happen more readily if the teacher succeeds in engaging the student emotionally as well as intellectually, by offering, for example, interpretations that are both critical and poetic — not only valid, but also exciting and inspiring. Yet even thoroughly studied and interpreted individual examples should not remain isolated in the students' minds, but should become embedded in the larger historic framework. Often phenomena are inexplicable unless one knows their antecedents. This is the reason why one of the greatest challenges in architectural education is how to reconcile a limited selection of historic examples with a satisfactory presentation of the broad panorama of history.

It is my conviction that architectural theories, regardless of their derivation from other realms of discourse, must be grounded in architectural history. Theory, as the term is used here, implies a total view and assessment which includes the recognition of operative principles and a set of basic assumptions and value judgments together with a working terminology that has been clarified with the greatest possible precision. An architectural theory needs to be validated with reference to the "facticity" of architecture — its physical, tactile presence. This facticity, for example, distinguishes architecture from a text, if the term "text" is used in its generally accepted manner. The philosopher Nelson Goodman has gone to some length in discussing how and why, in his words, "buildings are not texts." He explains: "With some interesting exceptions, architectural works do not denote — that is do not describe, recount, depict or portray. They mean, if at all, in other ways…." It is one thing to refer to a building metaphorically as a text and another to deal with it as if it really were a text.

A transferal of procedures from the area of literary criticism or linguistics to architectural criticism can have truly mystifying results. Analogous quick transferals from theories in areas of recent scientific research usually are equally dangerous, though they may stimulate interesting discussions.

If architectural theory and history must remain grounded in architecture's facticity, this brings us back to the actual building as the focus of teaching. It is the building seen in its intricate connection to all factors — including the non-architectural ones — that influenced its genesis. If the actual building is the focus, its preservation should be of paramount concern to the architectural historian and, by implication, to the teaching of architectural history. This is not to say that the technical detail of historic preservation should be included in courses of architectural history, but that one aspect of major importance to architectural designers should be explored: the juxtaposition of new and historic buildings. This could happen ideally in collaboration with a design instructor who is willing to assign the insertion of a new building into a historic setting. It is precisely on such an occasion that students will become strongly aware of the relevance of historical study for their future careers. Context is not a surface matter but a realization of the depth of time.

The 20th century has seen great advances in the study and teaching of architectural history and a widening of its horizon. The 21st century, I assume, will continue to explore further the new areas of interest and interdisciplinary collaboration, employing the powerful new tools the age of digitization is offering. All of this promises to have positive consequences for the teaching of architectural history. Clio should have every reason to be proud of her devotees. ■■■

Eduard F. Sekler is Professor of Architecture Emeritus and Osgood Hooker Professor of Visual Art Emeritus at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. In 2004, he will celebrate 50 years of teaching architectural history at the GSD. He is an architect and, as a UNESCO consultant, he has been internationally recognized for his pioneering preservation work in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. His numerous publications include *Josef Hoffmann: The Architectural Work.*

Further reading:

Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians
(XXVI/1, 1967, and recent issues LXI/3,4, 2002 and LXII/1, 2003)

Anthony Alofsin, *The Struggle for Modernism: Architecture, Landscape Architecture and City Planning at Harvard*
(W.W. Norton & Company, 2002)

Rudolf Arnheim, *Visual Thinking*
(University of California Press, 1969)

Martha Pollak, editor, *The Education of the Architect*
(MIT Press, 1997)

The Architecture of Education:

Photographs by Nancy Royal

All photos: © Nancy Royal LLC

With the anniversary of the September 11 attacks and the design competition for a memorial for the World Trade Center site, our thoughts are once again on memorials and their meaning, on their ability to offer solace and to honor those we have lost.

Nancy Royal's photographs of visitors to the New England Holocaust Memorial remind us of another aspect of memorials: they acquire new purpose as time goes on, beyond memory, beyond the expression of grief. As time goes on and survivors pass away, memorials can serve as a kind of architecture of education — to teach new generations, to convey the depth of loss, to tell the story yet again in the all-too-human hope that others might learn from our experiences.

— *Elizabeth Padjen FAIA*

Nancy Royal is a freelance photographer in Boston. Her initiation into photography was at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston with Hans Li as her mentor. Her work has been exhibited at Harvard University, Symphony Hall in Boston, and the Boston Architectural Center.

New England Holocaust Memorial
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Architect:
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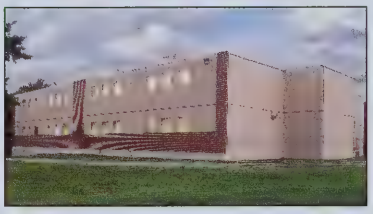

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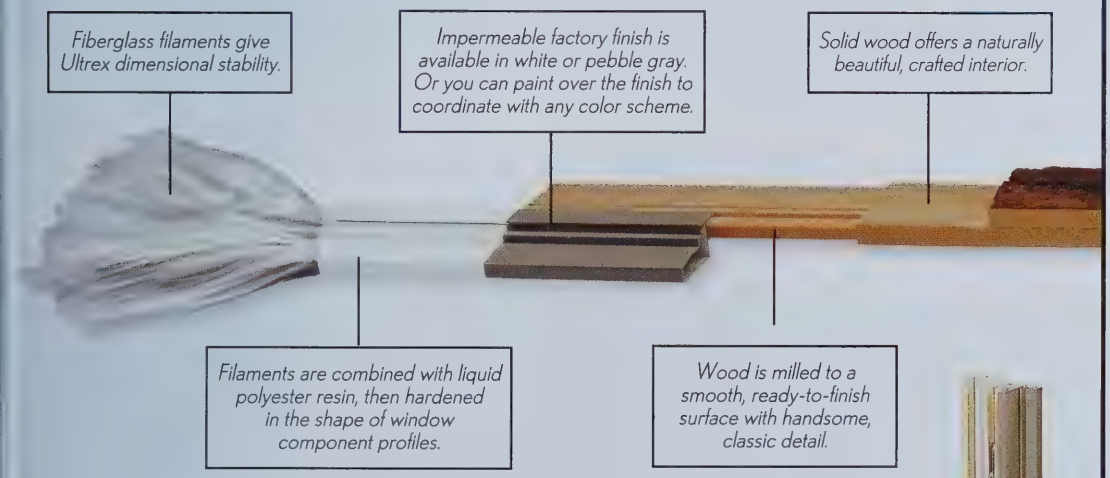

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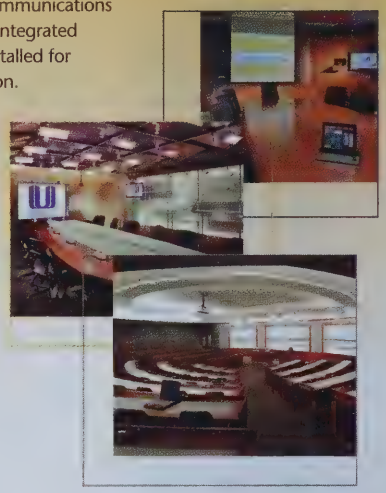

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Great Expectations:
The Design Career Threshold

by Erin Rae Hoffer BAC

Erin Rae Hoffer AIA is executive vice-president of the Boston Architectural Center. She is conducting research with Dr. Muriel Waldvogel and Sativa Saposnek (supported by a grant from the Boston Society of Architects) on the career expectations of emerging design professionals.

"I am instructed to communicate to him," said Mr. Jaggers, throwing his finger at me sideways, "that he will come into a handsome property. Further, that it is the desire of the present possessor of that property, that he be immediately removed from his present sphere of life and from this place, and be brought up as a gentleman — in a word, as a young fellow of great expectations."
— Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

Every year, thousands of individuals launch careers in design by entering one of 113 nationally accredited institutions of architectural education in the United States. Not unlike Pip, who arrives in London with great expectations for his life as a gentleman in Charles Dickens' novel, these men and women cross the threshold of their new profession brimming with aspirations. But as students quickly encounter the realities of academics and practice, many are forced to reassess their aspirations and reinvent a vision of their career future or leave the profession completely as a result.

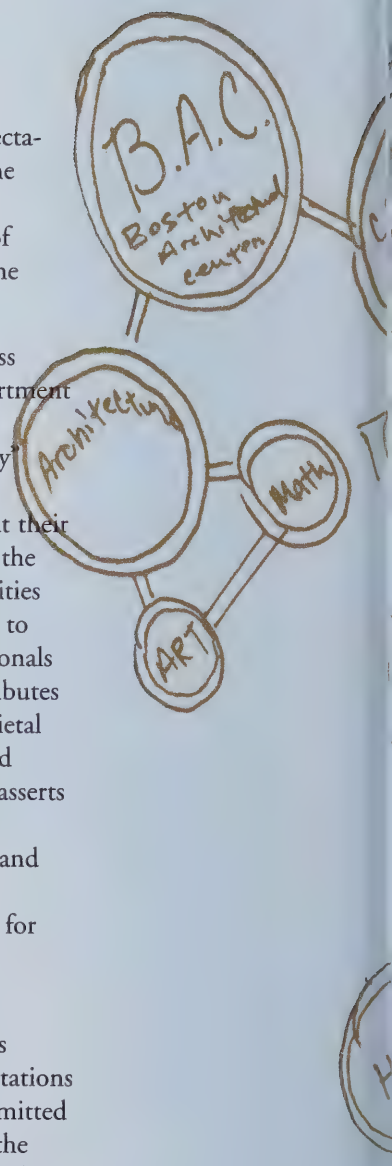
To better understand and address the causes of professional attrition, the Boston Architectural Center is conducting research into the career expectations and backgrounds of a population of over 200 entering and first-year students in architecture and interior design. Some have observed the profession first-hand, but a larger number of class entrants credit their own research into career options as the dominant source of their interest. This is an important factor in understanding career expectations, since the image of the design professional that a student intends to become is shaped by the myths and realities perpetuated by history, media, popular anecdotes, and public relations.

Preliminary findings suggest students are confident of their professional choices before beginning their academic programs, with 71 percent of them stating that they have a "very strong commitment" to a design career. Their expectations for the career itself are similarly high. When asked to predict their personal satisfaction 10 years after graduation, beginning students responded by predicting they will be "satisfied" to "highly satisfied" by varied aspects of their career such as enjoyment of day-to-day activities, degree of independence, amount of creativity, growth opportunities, influence, colleagues and clients, work-family balance, consistent values, mission, job security, and compensation. Entering students realize that design provides opportunities to exercise creativity and independence, to serve a mission of improving the built environment, but not necessarily to have job security, lucrative compensation or an easy work-family balance.

After exposure to design education, however, students begin immediately to adjust their expectations. Predicted career satisfaction scores drop within the first year in several areas. But what is particularly fascinating is that these predictions seem to depend upon the nature of the educational program. First-year students enrolled in a work-study program (consisting of both academic work and practice in an office setting) lower their expectations of future satisfaction by 4-8 percent. But first-year students enrolled in exclusively academic programs (without a practice component) show even higher levels of disillusionment: they lower their expectations of future satisfaction by 12-18 percent. Most notably, they lower their predicted compensation levels by 22 percent.

These findings offer a twist on conventional thinking. The broadly accepted implication that familiarity breeds reduced expectations among all students is supported by the results of a recent parallel study conducted with individuals 20 years after graduation. The same questions elicited assessments that were 23-27 percent lower than those of today's entering students. This decline in satisfaction assessments could be characterized as a healthy shift from a conceptual ideal to a complex and well-informed view of the profession. The fact that average responses remain in the "satisfied" end of the spectrum suggests that design careers are ultimately satisfying to those who remain within the field, but the apparent decline in the level of enthusiasm raises concerns about the sources of professional attrition and the opportunities to address them.

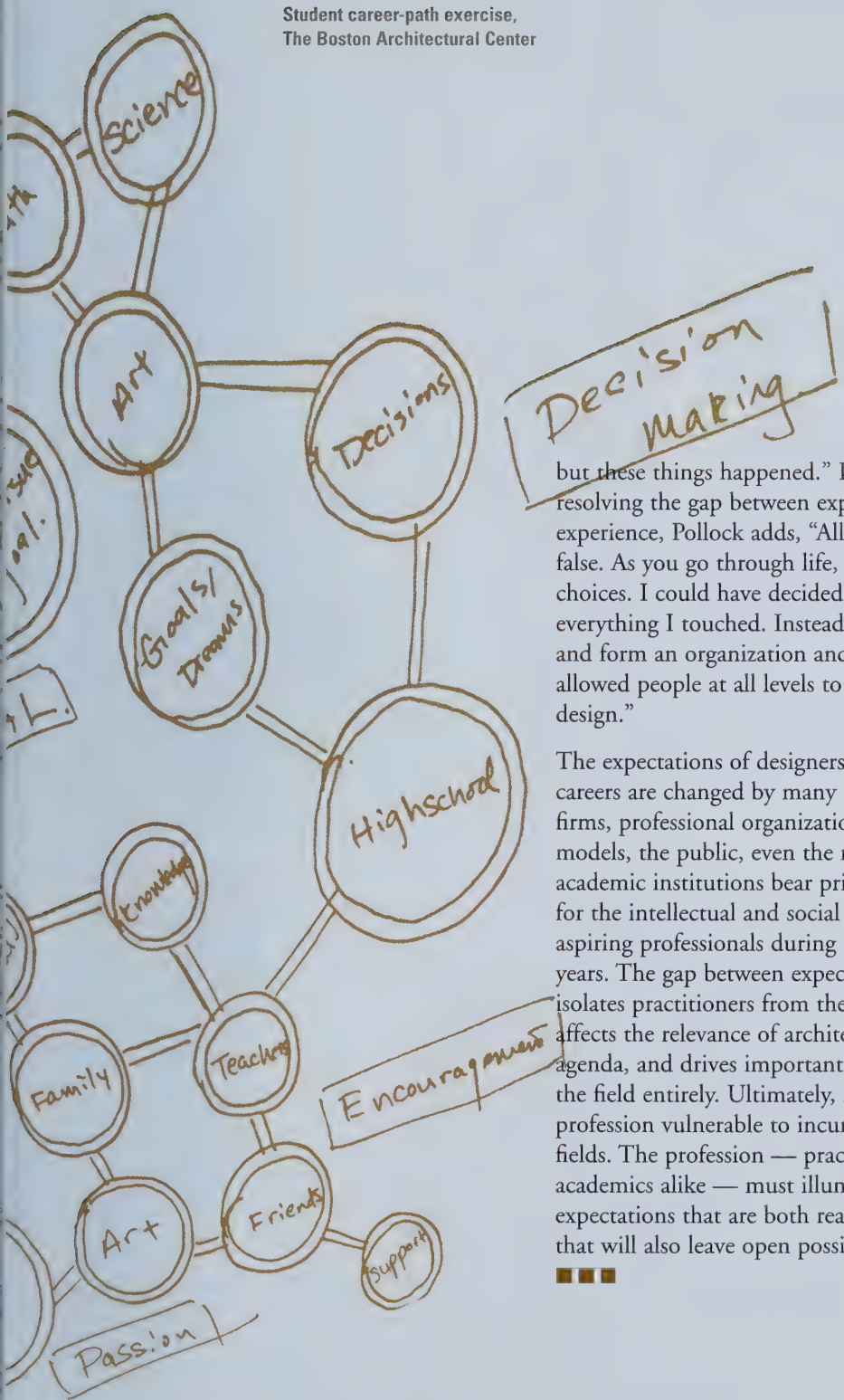
And yet it is the rapid disillusionment of students enrolled in academic programs where they are isolated from the everyday practice of their chosen field that should be a focus of concern and greater study. A landmark study by educators Ernest L. Boyer and Lee D. Mitgang in 1996 looked deeply into the state of design education and found that survey respondents believed the greatest weakness of architectural education was the lack of integration with professional practice. Academic programs have traditionally maintained a separation from practice to protect and grow students' "theoretical" awareness; even institutions that have launched practice-based initiatives often keep the core academic experience distinct from practice. Preliminary analysis by the Boston Architectural Center suggests that students who are exposed to practice concurrent with their academic study are able to retain higher expectations for career satisfaction, at least during the early stages of their careers. Does the theory/practice divide truly serve the development of emerging designers by isolating them from the realities of their profession?



Researchers Chris Argyris of Harvard Business School and Donald A. Schön of MIT's department of urban studies and planning have found significant differences in the "espoused theory" of design professionals, which describes how practitioners would like others to think about their work, and "theories-in-use," which describe the actual theories that are implicit in their activities and behaviors. This "theory gap" contributes to reduced effectiveness experienced by professionals as they progress through the field, and contributes to a separation of the profession from its societal context. Dana Cuff, a professor at UCLA and author of *Architecture: The Story of Practice*, asserts that, "The primary purveyor of professional knowledge, both tacit and explicit, aesthetic and technical, is the academy." Clearly, academic institutions must bear primary responsibility for leading the effort to increase the congruence between expectations and reality.

Cuff observes that, although young architects perceive clearly the gap between career expectations and their realization, those who remain committed to the field continue their socialization into the profession by developing new expectations as they observe senior practitioners at work. Wilson Pollock, principal of ADD Inc in Cambridge, Massachusetts, observes, "When I was in the school phase of my life, I never imagined that I would develop a firm. When we were a 10-person firm, I couldn't imagine growing to 20, and later to 40,

Student career-path exercise,
The Boston Architectural Center



but these things happened." In thinking about resolving the gap between expectations and experience, Pollock adds, "All generalizations are false. As you go through life, you're presented with choices. I could have decided I wanted to design everything I touched. Instead I decided to share and form an organization and a culture that allowed people at all levels to participate in design."

The expectations of designers throughout their careers are changed by many factors — mentors, firms, professional organizations, celebrity role models, the public, even the media — but academic institutions bear primary responsibility for the intellectual and social "care and feeding" of aspiring professionals during the critical foundation years. The gap between expectations and reality isolates practitioners from their social contexts, affects the relevance of architecture to the social agenda, and drives important contributors from the field entirely. Ultimately, it leaves the profession vulnerable to incursion from allied fields. The profession — practitioners and academics alike — must illuminate and shape expectations that are both realistic and malleable, that will also leave open possibilities for greatness. ■■■

For more information:

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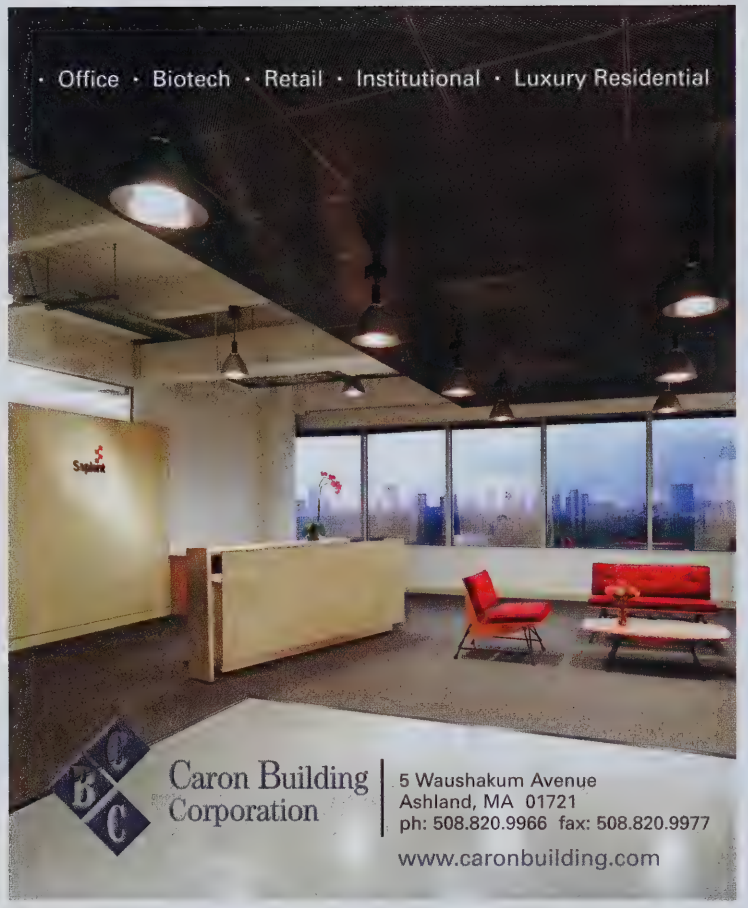
Dana Cuff, *Architecture: The Story of Practice* (MIT Press, 1991)

Thomas Dutton, *Voices in Architectural Education: Cultural Politics and Pedagogy* (Bergin & Garvey, 1991)

Aaron Koch, Katherine Schwennsen FAIA, Thomas Dutton, Deanna Smith, "Redesign of Studio Culture" (Report of the AIAS Studio Culture Task Force, 2002)

Andrew Saint, *Images of the Architect* (Yale University Press, 1983)

Ashraf M. A. Salama, *New Trends in Architectural Education: Designing the Design Studio,* 1995 (downloadable from: http://archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.tcl?document_id=6330)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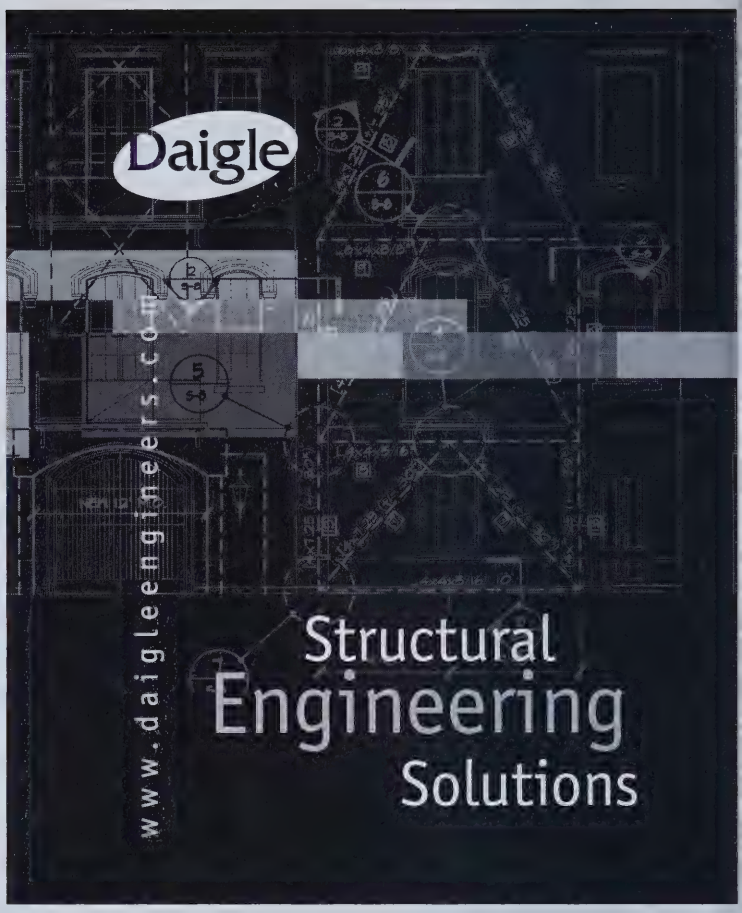
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Hearing Voices

John Cary, Jr., Assoc. AIA,
talks with Jeff Stein AIA

JOHN CARY, JR., ASSOC. AIA, is the executive director and co-founder, with Casius Pealer, of ArchVoices, a nonprofit organization and think-tank on architectural education and internship. He received his M.Arch degree from the University of California, Berkeley, where he is also a PhD student.

JEFF STEIN AIA is the architecture critic for *Banker & Tradesman* and professor of architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology. He recently served as commissioner of education for the Boston Society of Architects and is a member of the editorial board of *ArchitectureBoston*.

JEFF STEIN: A web search using keywords like "architecture," "education," and "internship," inevitably brings a searcher to ArchVoices.org, a website with almost 14,000 subscribers and the major online forum for current and future interns in the practice of architecture. In the report, *Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice* that came out in 1996, Ernest Boyer and Lee Mitgang wrote this about internships: "Internships before and after graduation are the most essential link connecting students to the world of practice. Yet, by all accounts internship is perhaps the most troubled phase of the continuing education of architects." Was it this report or the troubled condition of internship that led you to start ArchVoices?

JOHN CARY: I was just graduating from high school when that book came out, believe it or not. It wasn't until about four or five years later that it made an impression on me and I have since read it dozens of times. Actually, it was the 1999 Internship Summit that the five collateral organizations of architecture organized that really motivated us to start ArchVoices. That conference presented internship in the same light as Boyer and Mitgang had, as part of the continuing education of an architect. Architectural education gets a significant amount of coverage within the architectural press and even sometimes in the popular press. Internship has somehow evaded a lot of that criticism and a lot of that focus so we have tried to bring internship to light in the same way as education.

JEFF STEIN: In the book, *Reflections on Architectural Practices in the '90s,* Mack Scogin wrote, "Perhaps the most critical question is how is one to conduct oneself as an architect?" That apparently isn't taught in school. It only begins to happen in internship.

JOHN CARY: I certainly think that is the case. But most people have this idea that we start thinking like architects at a very early age before we even go to architecture school. But it is actually the profession that defines when one can call oneself an architect.

JEFF STEIN: In fact, that has been one of the issues at the Internship Summits, both the one that ArchVoices grew out of in 1999 and the more recent one in 2002. What should architectural interns be called, and is licensure the threshold one must cross before one can call oneself an architect?

JOHN CARY: Well, it really depends who you talk to. The state regulation boards as well as NCARB [National Council of Architectural Registration Boards] are very protective of the title of "architect." It is employers who have created names like "graduate architect" or "junior architect" or have simply discarded the whole architect terminology and call individuals "project managers" or other titles.

JEFF STEIN: Designers.

JOHN CARY: Yes, designers as well. *The AIA Compensation Survey* used to list young professionals as Intern I, Intern II, Intern III, and Architect I. And you only achieved Architect I after you were licensed. In its 2002 report, the AIA realized that threshold no longer exists and that there is certainly no distinction between those who are licensed three years out of school or those who are simply three years out of school. So it has adopted the term "non-registered architect." This basically shows that internship essentially ends after three years whether or not you become licensed. There are actually more unlicensed professionals working in architecture firms at this point than there are licensed professionals — 52 percent.

JEFF STEIN: So how did ArchVoices grow and what are you trying to do with it?

JOHN CARY: After the 1999 Summit, a small group of young people were concerned about what would come next. There was no real commitment to any follow-up efforts by the collateral organizations. ArchVoices started as an e-mail exchange among a few friends and acquaintances, initiated by Casius Pealer — he was at that time based in the West Indies literally living in a banana field while he was serving in the US Peace Corps. We soon realized that young professionals were dying to have an outlet or a forum to discuss issues. We decided to focus on providing resources, editorials, and opinions through our newsletter and that has remained one of our core competencies.

JEFF STEIN: What made you imagine that you couldn't do all of that through one of the existing collateral organizations?

JOHN CARY: Well, we have aways been very involved with the collateral organizations. In fact, at the time that ArchVoices was founded, I was the 1999–2000 AIAS [American Institute of Architecture Students] National Vice President. But we realized that these organizations, just like our own organization, have limitations. We thought it was important to have an independent voice. We started to collaborate in pretty formal and significant ways with the collaterals, but there was certainly a time when we were looked at with some adversity because people didn't know what direction we were moving in or what we ultimately aspired to be. I think it has become clear that we are in fact aspiring to be a think-tank, meaning that we are uniting research and opinions and statistics and ideas. We are at the point where we are quite valued by the collateral organizations. There are obviously individual exceptions.

JEFF STEIN: One of the interesting aspects about your website is the archive that you have developed about other organizations like NCARB and about the evolution of the whole idea of internship.

There are actually more unlicensed professionals working in architecture firms at this point than there are licensed professionals.

JOHN CARY: One of our goals from the beginning has been to provide a context for these discussion.

JEFF STEIN: Your use of the word "context" is an important one. The Latin root of that word means literally "to weave together." It has to do with coherence and creating something that is able to hold together over time. And it seems to me that this is pretty much the goal of internship — to provide a context for one's behavior as an architect

JOHN CARY: Very much so. I think an even greater issue, however, is that internship is many different things to many different people, including employers, mentors, and the interns themselves.

JEFF STEIN: That is one of the troubling aspects of this. Internship for the intern might be a very different thing than it is for that intern's employer.

JOHN CARY: That's not surprising. Firms are profit-driven, they are concerned with the bottom line, they have deadlines to meet, and clients to please. And the program that we use to define internship, the Intern Development Program [IDP], somehow takes a backseat to a lot of these other issues. Unfortunately, the IDP hasn't reacted to this reality. It has remained unchanged for nearly 25 years.

JEFF STEIN: But the practice of architecture has changed in significant ways. The computerization of the profession and of education has been a huge change. And there's also been a change in attitude on the part of employers toward their interns — the notion of mentorship, a leftover from the old apprenticeship model , seems to have dissolved. That model doesn't work quite so well when interns are the ones with all of the computer skills, and the people who used to be the mentors are the ones who need the skills of their interns.

JOHN CARY: Well, there is certainly some thinking that there is a generational gap among those people who are using the computers and those who are not. But it is definitely not as simple as saying older principals can't use the computer and young interns can. I know a lot of graduates who despise the computer probably even more than their employers. They have grown to resent it because they often spend a whole lot of time doing CAD [computer-aided design].

JEFF STEIN: Does ArchVoices take any positions on how IDP works and how it might change and on the need to change it?

JOHN CARY: We certainly do. We've advocated for many of the recommendations made by the national organizations themselves that have stalled for one reason or another. For example, something called the "Collateral Internship Task Force Final Report" made nine recommendations in 2001, ranging from the need to integrate practice and education to strengthening reciprocity between states and other countries to much more specific and controversial recommendations. The final recommendation is the real sticking point and that is the idea that graduates of architecture schools be called "architects" upon graduation. A more recent recommendation stemming from the 2002 Internship Summit is that IDP should be less of an *intern* development program and more of a *professional* development program. We think that is a significant distinction. The interesting thing is that IDP was originally a voluntary program. It is now required.

JEFF STEIN: Yes. And I've read that it might revert to a voluntary program.

JOHN CARY: The reality is that it is already becoming voluntary because a lot of people are not entering it, or not completing it, or not taking it seriously, or worse, falsifying their records. NCARB is slowly dealing with that.

JEFF STEIN: What are some of the limitations of ArchVoices?

JOHN CARY: There are a lot of limitations. The first is that it is essentially a volunteer effort and it is working under the goodwill of just a few people who are committed to this exchange among young professionals about issues affecting them. There are really very few funding opportunities to support this kind of an effort. The national organizations are resistant. They may support us morally and mentally, but putting money into this would be an official stamp of approval and some of them are just too conservative to really take a stance. So funding is a problem. But energy is not. We have committed people all over the country and the world. Initiatives like our recent essay competition demonstrate that people do want to be heard and do want to offer their suggestions and opinions. That is incredibly fulfilling and that is what motivates us from week to week.

JEFF STEIN: The essay competition was a fascinating aspect of ArchVoices.

JOHN CARY: That was by far the most rewarding and fulfilling for us. It just took off in ways we never expected and it involved so many new people. I think I have a pretty good tap on the pulse of interns and young professionals and I knew only a couple of the people who entered. People took it as an opportunity to share their thoughts.

JEFF STEIN: I notice that the issues of diversity and of women in the profession of architecture play quite a role in the writing and opinions in ArchVoices. Is internship a place where some changes could be made that would be more supportive of diversity within the profession?

JOHN CARY: I think it happens at a number of places. At this point roughly 45 percent of all candidates for professional degrees are women.

JEFF STEIN: And only about 10 percent of registered architects are women.

JOHN CARY: Right. And in between, roughly 30 percent of interns are women, so we have already lost 15 percent upon graduation. Then after internship you lose another 20 percent. As Kathryn Anthony points out in her book, *Designing for Diversity*, internship and registration fall at a time when many women are starting families and have other responsibilities. As a think tank on education and internship, ArchVoices considers minority and women issues as crucial parts of the whole discussion.

JEFF STEIN: What is ArchVoices doing entrepreneurially so that we can be sure that it will continue to survive and grow?

JOHN CARY: We continue to submit grant applications. Recently we received a grant from the Graham Foundation, and we also have a very strong relation with a relatively new foundation called the Enkeboll Foundation for the Arts and Architecture. We continue to rely on the goodwill of AIA components like the Boston Society of Architects and AIA Minnesota as well as firms and schools. The one thing I want to clarify is that it doesn't take much money to do what we are doing. That is yet another reason why I think the collateral organizations are not fulfilling their missions in this arena. We have some people who ask why we aren't part of the AIA, that this is something that the AIA should be doing. We totally agree, but it is not doing it.

JEFF STEIN: In the end, what do you think is the usefulness of internship?

JOHN CARY: I think internship is a place that has real potential to expose the connections between education and practice, meaning between schools and firms, and I don't think it is thought of in that way at all. People, mainly the registration boards and NCARB, think of it as a very individual process leading to registration. It can be much more than that. I think it should be about developing the entire profession more than about developing individuals. ■■■

ArchitectureBoston recently asked interns and principals from six prominent firms:

If you were establishing a new school of architecture, what are three elective courses you would add to the curriculum?

1. **Philosophy**
2. **Reading cultural artifacts**
3. **How to make (something)**

Christine Gaspar, Intern
Schwartz/Silver Architects
Boston

1. **Studio art**
2. **Human and social interaction (psychology, anthropology, or public relations)**
3. **Business (especially negotiation skills)**

Warren Schwartz FAIA, Founding Principal
Schwartz/Silver Architects
Boston

1. **3D computer modeling and animation**
2. **Perspective sketching**
3. **Budgeting**

Amy L. Cheng, Intern
Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott
Boston

1. **Entrepreneurship and firm management**
2. **Environmentally sustainable design**
3. **Negotiation, listening, and collaboration**

Elise F. Woodward AIA, Principal
Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott
Boston

1. **Digital photography and imaging**
2. **Project management basics**
3. **A survey of domestic American architecture**

Joey Favaloro, Intern
Cambridge Seven Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

1. **Photography**
2. **Building technology (with engineers)**
3. **Communication (starting with listening and moving on to negotiating, illustrating, sharing, clarifying)**

Peter Kuttner FAIA, President
Cambridge Seven Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

1. **Municipal politics**
2. **Chemistry**
3. **Migratory behavior of sub-Saharan predatory mammals (There are lots of things worth learning that have nothing to do with architecture.)**

Tim Cooper, Intern
Tsoi/Kobus & Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

1. **The art of entitlement: civic responsibility in modern urban environments**
2. **Draw more: drawing by hand**
3. **Color and materials**

Richard L. Kobus AIA, FACHA, Senior Principal
Tsoi/Kobus & Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

1. **Making architecture happen (developing construction details of a studio project)**
2. **Passive air play (passive temperature control systems)**
3. **Plumbing, drainage, and the cistern (how water flows, what we do with it, what we could do with it)**

Penapa "Noy" Hildebrand, Intern
Perry Dean Rogers/Partners
Boston

1. **Current cultural issues**
2. **Public policy and management of space**
3. **Digital media versus the hand-drawn idea**

Martha Pilgreen AIA, President
Perry Dean Rogers/Partners
Boston

1. **Sculpture/painting**
2. **Web site design**
3. **Music**

Nicole Kuhar, Assoc. AIA, Intern
Steffian Bradley Architects
Boston

1. **Physiology**
2. **Poetry and music**
3. **Business practice**

Peter Steffian FAIA, Chairman of the Board
Steffian Bradley Architects
Boston

Compare/contrast: Learning from other professions

Architecture and Medicine

by George Takoudes AIA

photo: David Carmack

George Takoudes AIA is an associate at Payette Associates in Boston. He earned his Master of Architecture degree in 1996 and became a registered architect 12 years after graduating from high school. His wife, Tamara Takoudes, MD, is a high-risk obstetrician and is currently in the 15th and final year of her post-high-school higher education-training. Although not the protagonists of this parable, their lives have followed similar paths.

On the last day of high school, a teacher sits with two students. She proceeds to tell them that to become professionals, their formal education is half complete. They will need anywhere from 10 to 15 additional years of structured and sometimes painfully intense higher education and formal training. They are told that success within their profession is contingent on achievement at the highest level. One must be as facile with theory as with practical problem-solving. One must be of upstanding moral character and hold true the principles of public welfare and safety. One must care deeply about people: how they live, how they feel, how they experience the world. The teacher proceeds to hand an architect's scale to one and a physician's stethoscope to the other. The students embark on their respective journeys that will bring both great challenges and great rewards.

The two reunite many years later to find that much of what their teacher described held true. But they realize that they are the products of different processes of preparation. The architect has been challenged to navigate between distinct centers of education and practice. Upon graduating from architecture school, he yearned for the tangible expressions of his ideas but still remained years from making significant contributions to real buildings for real clients. He rejoiced in the title "architect" upon passing his registration exam after several years of his internship development program.

The doctor had a different experience. Upon graduating from medical school, she was a "doctor" sworn to the Hippocratic oath. She had taken and passed two of three parts of her general licensing exam. She had — under close supervision — delivered babies, performed surgery, and treated cancer. During her subsequent residency, she refined her ability to leverage her immense academic knowledge in a practical setting. She became proficient in process and procedures. Her hands, eyes, ears, nose, and intuition were sophisticated tools of diagnosis and treatment. And she was on her way to making and trusting her own professional judgments.

Her career preparation was not marked by academic achievement but symbiotic to it. Residents and fellows actually receive both salaries and diplomas from their institutions. These institutions — teaching hospitals — are centers of medical education and training. They are home to a sophisticated system of teaching, supervision, and practical training. "Classes" are conducted in the form of rounds, hands-on experience, and full immersion in the practical arena. There is no end and no beginning to the cycle of instruction. Medical students, residents, and "attendings" (senior faculty) work-learn in these environments as both students and teachers. All are required, to some degree, to give lectures, present research or journal articles, and participate in clinical instruction. In fact, the etymology of the word doctor is "to teach." In teaching hospitals, everyone learns because everyone teaches.

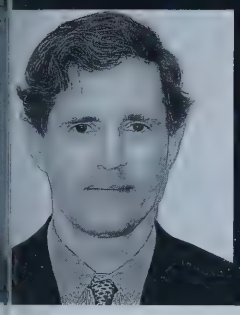
For emerging doctors, the distinction between learning and working is not lessened; it is dissolved. This is in direct contrast to architectural education, and for several reasons this model does not easily transfer. Doctors literally perform their art with their own hands. Architects make representations of architecture and direct its execution by others. Doctors deliver care — patient-by-patient, case-by-case — in an intensely intimate environment. Architects work with a significant range of scale — from urban design to detail design.

The architect and the doctor, who later married, are now immersed in their work, each finding satisfaction and frustration in their chosen fields. Despite vast differences in their training, they have discovered they have much in common. After years of education and training, they find themselves prepared yet still learning. They are both inculcated with the ideals of professionalism. And they both approach professional practice with a profound sense of responsibility and respect. Even so, he still gets bad colds in the winter, and she complains that the kitchen needs redesigning. ■ ■ ■

Compare/contrast: Learning from other professions

Architecture and Law

by Jay Wickersham AIA



Jay Wickersham AIA graduated from the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) and Harvard Law School. He is a partner in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, law firm Noble & Wickersham LLP, specializing in construction and environmental law. He teaches planning and environmental law at the GSD.

Let me be frank: I was miserable in architecture school. For three years I felt inadequate and confused.

When I decided to change careers some time later, I approached law school with trepidation. If I had found architecture school difficult and brutal, wouldn't law school — notorious for terrorizing students — be even worse? But it wasn't. I loved law school: it restored my confidence and made me feel that possibilities were opening up, not closing down.

Today the wounds of architecture school have healed (somewhat). It's clear to me now that I'm better suited to be a lawyer than an architect. But I also believe that there are some objective ways in which law schools serve their students better than do architecture schools.

The design studio was architecture school's greatest strength. The studio was all about learning by doing. We were forced to tackle all the complexities of a project — site, program, technology — and meld them into a coherent design. We learned to identify and choose among different concepts, and to develop those concepts in detail. By comparison, law school relied on a more passive format. Our professors posed questions to large classes, often with a hundred or more students. There were a couple of moot-court exercises in the first year, in which we briefed and argued a case before a panel of judges; otherwise, our grades were based solely on papers and exams.

The value of my design-studio experience, though, must be weighed against the harsh and often destructive criticism to which students were subjected, and the way that we were often pushed to design in the manner of our teachers. I found the Socratic questioning of my law-school teachers fairer and more productive than most of my architecture-school crits. Law professors generally encouraged debate among competing viewpoints. Rigorous teaching was not seen as incompatible with preserving the students' dignity.

The two schools also differed in their approach to the professional's role. From the very first day of law school, it was drummed into our heads that a lawyer is an advocate. Our job was to concentrate our skills and efforts toward achieving our client's goals. Architects are advocates, too. They realize their artistic visions in the service of someone else's needs; their visions are built with someone else's money. But in architecture school, the client was virtually invisible. Our designs were criticized in terms of artistry, or technology, but rarely according to how well they satisfied the client's program.

Finally, architecture school promoted a narrow view of practice. The focus on the design studio never changed over the course of three years. Yes, design is hard; it takes dedication and patience and skill, and the studio is the best way for students and teachers to test and refine those qualities. But by teaching that design is the only thing that counts, both in school and in the profession, architecture school risked culling out students with other valuable skills to offer.

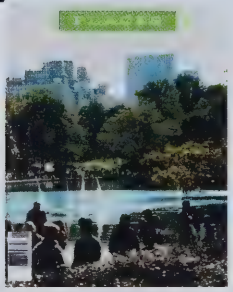
In contrast, after the first year, law students were encouraged to explore different aspects of practice — often by putting their newly learned skills to work outside the classroom. Students who were interested in courtroom litigation worked as legal defenders, in prisons or housing courts. Students aiming at academia spent much of their time writing and editing law-review articles. Students with specific interests could specialize in civil-rights law, or environmental law, or mergers and acquisitions. Many of my classmates have never even practiced law.

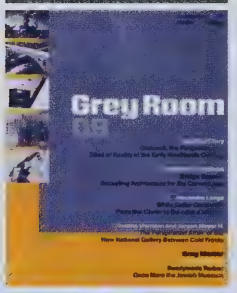
Despite these reservations, I'm glad I went to architecture school. It taught me how physical design shapes the world and shapes our lives. It taught me to synthesize information, to map out alternatives, to develop concepts with patience and rigor. These lessons have stuck with me ever since. Architecture school made me a better lawyer.

Covering the Issues

Periodical roundup

by Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA





In this issue, "Covering the Issues" looks at academic journals...

The Rhode Island School of Design Department of Architecture's annual ***WORK in progress*** (Issue 6, Spring 2002; Issue 7, Spring 2003) is about as straightforward a showcase of school work as one could hope for. Simple, clear text and graphics place the emphasis where it should be: on projects and the ideas behind them. Like RISD itself, each article in this slim volume focuses on the process of exquisitely making something real. Occasional phrases such as "tectonic investigation" and "cogent articulations" seem intended to remind us this place intellectually holds its own. But then an author complains about unplugged extension cords, reassuring us that the wicked-smart RISD crowd also possesses a great sense of humor.

CRiT magazine, representing the category of "student-led idea journals," is published biannually by the American Institute of Architecture Students. Elegantly assembled, *CRiT* showcases design projects and articles by students of all levels and faculty of all ranks from colleges and universities across the country. Sound egalitarian? It is... which sometimes works and sometimes doesn't. In the "urban issue" (Fall 2002), for instance, diverse geography belies strangely homogeneous views, as conservative New Urbanist-like perspectives take over in annoyingly teacherly tones. (Isn't it the next generation's job to be radical and to challenge the current status quo?) "Place" (Spring 2003), however, is excellent. Asking open-ended questions about what "place" is and how we make it, this issue features places both virtual and physical.

Places and *Harvard Design Magazine* represent the academy's intersection with the "real" world. Places is editorially based at Pratt Institute and the University of California/Berkeley, and published by the Design History Foundation. *HDM* is from, well, Harvard. Contributors to both are established experts in many different fields, and most are faculty members. In separate ways, these journals each intelligently consider the design of the entire built environment — meaning all that surrounds us, not just buildings. Both also address architecture's broader cultural, physical, and intellectual contexts with an eye toward effecting real change. Reading *Harvard Design Magazine* is sort of like watching James Bond: the sophisticated 007 entangles in the global debates of the day (whether Cold War spies or feminist politics) as his techno-gadgets foreshadow our future. (Those wristwatch camera phones weren't so far off, after all.) Likewise, *HDM's* sophisticated themed issues tackle timely concerns — whether environmental destruction (Spring/Summer 2003) or rampant consumerism (Fall 2002/Winter 2003) — while incorporating discussions of futuristic research that someday might not sound so far-fetched. Imagine, for instance, lighting and heating only the air around our bodies — where we truly need it — rather than the enormous mostly-empty volume of a room. *Places* is more immediately applicable, featuring success stories such as San José's downtown redevelopment (Winter 2003) and public open spaces in Central Park, Bogotá, and Chicago (Summer 2003). *Places* is smart enough to include contributions by politicians and community activists — the people who help our design rubber meet the architectural road.

Lest you be led astray by such practical points of view, academic bookshelves are also full of scholarly journals geared towards discourse for discourse's sake. And it matters little whether or not we mere mortals understand. Relative newcomer ***Grey Room*** (from MIT Press) is a favorite in this category. (When I hit the phrase "sensory modalities" within the first few hundred words, I knew that this would be a good one.) Cheeky commentary aside, *Grey Room* is dedicated to "architecture, art, media, and politics"; the articles in recent issues 09 and 10 vary wildly — but delightfully. Some are obtuse, don't-leave-home-without-your-dictionary sorts, while others shed new light on the McCarthy hearings or describe tongue-in-cheek how Mies van der Rohe's National Gallery literally sweat (fom condensation) in its Berlin Wall context. And then there's the author who takes readers from 19th-century courting rituals to Louis Sullivan's architectural ornament to modern bridge construction. You have no idea how he pulls it off, but it's a fantastic ride.

Although it's not an academic journal, ***arcCA***, the quarterly journal of the AIA/California Council, has published an issue that is a must-read for anyone who cares about architectural education: "Common Knowledge" (Spring 2003). Perhaps most revealing are the descriptions submitted by nine California architecture schools of coursework geared to address realities of architectural practice. ■■■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, teaches the architecture studios at Smith College and maintains a practice in Boston.

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Books

Private Jokes, Public Places

by Oren Safdie
Playwrights Canada Press, 2001

Reviewed by
Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA

The scene opens at Margaret's final review. She's presenting her design project to an assembled jury of experts, at an unnamed elite American architecture graduate school.

For those who wonder what it's like inside the belly of the beast, this is it. For those who remember, it'll send chills up your spine. For those who work in the academic world (as I do), ouch! Who said that the sharp knife would hurt less?

Private Jokes, Public Places is the smart, provocative play by Oren Safdie that offers an insider's view to architectural academia on the most intense and important day of the entire school year while revealing how absurd the scene can be. There are four characters: our heroine, Margaret, a bright, talented, and hard-working Korean-American architecture student; William, her studio professor with limited "real" experience and a questionable close relationship with Margaret; Erhardt, a German architect; and Colin, a British architectural theorist. Erhardt and Colin, both presumably established and experienced, are serving as guest critics to discuss and critique the students' projects.

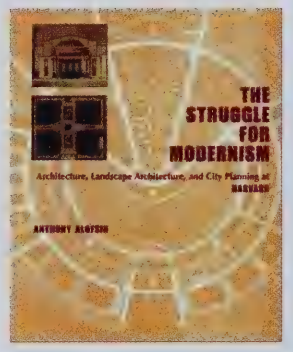
Of course what they do discuss and critique is anything but Margaret's work, despite her best efforts to turn the talk toward her design. With long-winded diatribes, arcane archibabble, and biting verbal repartee alternately hilarious and infuriating, Erhardt and Colin lead increasingly personal attacks on Margaret, her race, gender, religion, outfit, and her conviction that the Modern Movement failed. If anyone questions why architectural education has been the target of vigorous criticism this past decade, this is it. *Private Jokes, Public Places* paints a damning portrait of the hyper-theoretical, quasi-intellectual, arrogant rambling that passes as architectural discourse at more than one elite design school. Safdie has recreated talkitecture at its finest.

Safdie expertly captures the cadence, vocabulary, tone, and terror of an architecture jury experience as only an insider could. Indeed, having studied at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture and as the offspring of architectural giant Moshe, Safdie the younger knows intimately the world of which he speaks.

Growing more stubborn, clear-headed, and articulate as the inquisition progresses, Margaret's character represents frustrations and ambitions that many students will find familiar. Margaret argues that good architecture must transcend fashion. She criticizes the spectacle of school where the ridiculous is rewarded and meaning is abandoned in favor of glitzy eye-candy computer graphics. Finally, with a nod to Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead*, Margaret becomes the monologued voice of passionate ideals, albeit of the revised, anti-modern sort. This time, our heroine cries out for an architecture of places that "regular" people might find comfortable. How radical.

Performed to critical acclaim in California and New York, *Private Jokes, Public Places* has sent audiences (or at least critics) home howling with laughter. School's not really that bad, right? Or is it...

Gretchen Scheider, Assoc. AIA, maintains a practice in Boston and teaches the architecture studios at Smith College.



The Struggle for Modernism: Architecture, Landscape Architecture and City Planning at Harvard

by Anthony Alofsin
W.W. Norton & Company, 2002

Reviewed by
Robert Taylor AIA

The core strength of a design school, or an architecture firm, springs from in-house talent and culture more than famous figureheads or fly-by stars. Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD), dominant by size and influence, exemplifies this. Around 1950, it was considered the world's best, a verdict later reversed by Klaus Herdeg in *The Decorated Diagram* and, more popularly, by Tom Wolfe in *From Bauhaus to Our House*, who accuse Harvard of design education's greatest mistakes. Flip through Herdeg's portfolio of evidence and you might concede that point. Anthony Alofsin's excellent history of design education at Harvard portrays GSD culture with depth and detail missing from those rants, illustrated with a counterportfolio of brilliant student work and a chronicle of curricular and faculty struggles.

Alofsin's history depicts the years 1895 to 1995, focusing on the GSD at its peak of influence, when postwar graduates Paul Rudolph, I.M. Pei, Philip Johnson, and others had their theses published worldwide in 1950 in *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, and landscape grads Dan Kiley, Garrett Eckbo, and Hideo Sasaki emerged to dominate their field. GSD teachers, too, dispersed everywhere to rework design education along Harvard lines: William Holmes Perkins made the Penn architecture department a powerhouse of the '60s, Robert Geddes built Princeton's program, and Sam Hurst became dean of architecture at Auburn and later the University of Southern California.

Legend holds Walter Gropius as the Sun King of this mythic era, but Alofsin presents the facts to instate Joseph Hudnut as the story's key figure. A leading educator and proponent of Modernism when appointed dean of design in 1936, Hudnut consolidated three departments into the GSD, envisioning a modern curriculum based in socially relevant design problems and collaboration among disciplines. Hudnut — who hired Gropius as chairman of the architecture department — oversaw the success of the GSD and also its unraveling. Hudnut increasingly resisted Gropius' efforts to strip history and drawing from the curriculum, stack the department with sycophants, and reduce design to pseudo-science. He coined the phrase "post-modern" in a 1945 essay decrying the absence of spirit, culture, and emotion in international functionalism. In 1952, he forced the retirement of Gropius, here seen as a brilliant ornery grump. By 1953, the GSD was collapsing from internal rancor when Harvard President Nathan Pusey personally intervened, naming Josep Lluis Sert as successor to both Hudnut and Gropius. Sert restaffed the school with Corbusier sympathizers to humanize modern design education, and another remarkable but unstable period began its run.

Alofsin's text and footnotes constitute heartfelt appreciation for GSD mainstays, like librarian Katherine McNamara (35 years) and historian Eduard Sekler (50 years). Unsung lifers and youthful optimists populate this portrait of an imperfect but ever-evolving culture of design education, the endeavor of many to define and transmit teachable values of Modernism.

Robert Taylor AIA is a principal of Taylor & Burns in Boston.

First House

by Christian Bjone
Wiley-Academy, 2002

Reviewed by
Robert J. Miklos FAIA

Christian Bjone's *First House* chronicles the early residential commissions of the first generation of architects trained at Harvard during the Gropius years, 1937–1952. These idealistic young architects attempted to translate the ideals of "European Modernism" to the American situation — work that gained the less-than-flattering label of the "Harvard Shoebox." Bjone has selected eight architects to represent the group: Edward Larrabee Barnes, Ulrich Frazen, John Johansen, Philip Johnson, Landis Gores, Eliot Noyes, I.M. Pei, and Paul Rudolph. Along with their youthful instructor Marcel Breuer, these designers would later become the leading voices of American Modernism during the post-World War II era.

Bjone organizes the book as "portfolios" including several projects by each architect and featuring their "first house." The portfolios are documented in photographs (including informal family shots) and drawings from the period; each is preceded by a short description highlighting the designer's theoretical or philosophical interests and their impact on the basic typology of the box.

Unfortunately, the author's commentary does not provide fresh insights, but simply recapitulates timeworn theories about the translation of socially engaged, idealistic European Modernism ("Modernism as ideology") into a predominantly formal and pragmatic American Modernism ("Modernism as style"). Bjone's Heideggerian notion that Modernism was passed like a torch from enlightened exiled European teacher/practitioners to wealthy but naïve American Harvard students is historically inaccurate and ignores the larger influences in the development of American Modernism, including the work of late 19th-century and early 20th-century American practitioners. Bjone also falls short of offering connections between these early works and the mature work of the architects represented.

Bjone attempts to provide insights into the spirit and impact of the "moment" in a section called "Spreading the Word Far and Wide." There, he examines the influence of photographer Ezra Stoller, writer Peter Blake, and historian Vincent Scully through magazine articles and books as well as their own experimental first houses. Peter Blake's Pinwheel house and Bridgehampton house truly capture the energy and innovative thinking of the moment. Vincent Scully's unremarkable house and irrelevant comments should have been omitted.

In the end, the value of *First House* is in providing a black-and-white snapshot that gathers in one place the various formal investigations of early Modernism in suburban New York and New England.

In the afterword, Philip Johnson writes, "I hate this book for all that it has missed…but I love this book for what it has found." From my own perspective, the work represented is so interesting and provocative that I would recommend the book, despite its theoretical shortcomings. I will caution the potential reader, however, that at $75.00 you may find it priced at twice your expectation.

Robert J. Miklos FAIA is a principal and studio director at Ann Beha Architects in Boston.

Building Codes Illustrated: A Guide to Understanding the International Building Code

by Francis D.K. Ching and Steven R. Winkel FAIA

Reviewed by
A. Vernon Woodworth AIA

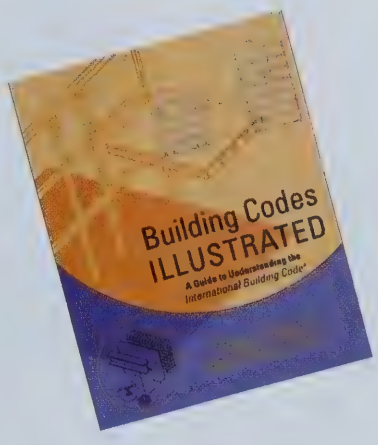
The first edition of the International Building Code (IBC) was published in 2000, signaling the end of the three previously competing model codes, the Uniform Building Code, the National Building Code, and the Southern Building Code. Jurisdictions across the country (most recently, New York City) are now rapidly adopting the IBC. Because the IBC purports to take the best from the three former model codes, and because it is part of a coordinated family of codes covering everything from zoning to plumbing, architects should celebrate this development. But codes are rarely a source of celebration in our profession, and learning a new code can be a daunting proposition indeed.

Building Codes Illustrated was written to make the IBC user-friendly. Steven Winkel participated in the development of the IBC and knows how important codes are to the profession. He is careful to explain the history and role of codes and does not assume prior knowledge of the subject. While the bulk of the book is formatted along the familiar "common code format" (such that chapters correspond to the topic format of a building code), this is much more than a traditional commentary volume, which seeks only to explain each code section. Winkel provides the overview and explains the meaning of the code without parsing each provision. His intent is to lead the designer through the code as a companion to the design process.

To this end, the graphics provided by Francis Ching are as much the means of communication as the text. Ching has not lovingly hand-lettered this volume as with his previous books (including *Architectural Graphics* and *Building Construction Illustrated*), and the illustrations are not hand-drawn. But the care to illustrate each concept in a manner that speaks directly to architects is as much a part of this book as his earlier works.

This volume is the entry point to a new era in codes, for students, practitioners, and builders. Because fundamental changes have been introduced, such as the formula for computing height and area limitations, we are going to need all the help we can get. This book can help break you into the new code, but it cannot replace it. The authors have based their volume on IBC 2000 while IBC 2003 is already out, and local jurisdictions will modify the IBC for various reasons. But if for you a picture is worth a thousand words, this book will do for you what no building code can ever do.

A. Vernon Woodworth AIA is a member of the Sullivan Code Group in Boston and is chair of the Boston Society of Architects Codes Committee.



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Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture
www.acsa-arch.org

The ACSA is a combination of science fair and teachers' room for architectural educators dedicated to improving the world of architectural academia — its conferences offer a place to talk about *what* they teach and *how* they teach. A terrific resource for aspiring students, the "Info for Students" page includes a history of architectural education that professionals will find fascinating, too.

Theban Mapping Project
www.thebanmappingproject.com

Yin Yu Tang: A Chinese House
www.pem.org/yinyutang

These two remarkable sites (both designed by Second Story of Portland, Oregon) represent astounding achievement in Web design that will open your eyes to the future of teaching the past.

ArchVoices
www.archvoices.org

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Ecole des Beaux-Arts
www.ensba.fr

Yup, the mother of all architecture schools is still here. Renamed Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts — or "Ensba" — its focus is decidedly on art, beau or otherwise.

Bauhaus
www.bauhaus-dessau.de

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Other Voices by Julia Gilbert

Oxford, England

For years I have been a grumpy resident of Oxford: too much traffic, too many tourists, too many students. Early last year as I lay in bed indulging my morning addiction to BBC Radio 4 (our equivalent of NPR), I heard nominations solicited for the ugliest street in Britain, and I idly thought: I ought to nominate Cornmarket.

Cornmarket is the central shopping street in Oxford, one block long. When I was first here, a brand-new graduate student at what I took to be the world's greatest university, I was told it was a "pedestrian precinct." In my innocence, I thought this meant it was safe to cross — no cars, of course. No cars, unless you counted taxis and delivery vans and the whopping great double-decker buses that bore down on me as I dashed from one side to the other. When Margaret Thatcher deregulated the public transportation industry, there was a famous bus war. No point in getting on one, because they couldn't move, but if you were so inclined, you could walk from one end of Cornmarket to the other on their roofs. These days the buses are banned, too, but there are still delivery vehicles, high-speed police chases, and ambulance dashes swerving around traffic barriers of the latest infrastructure-improvement project with holes deep and wide enough to bury any dissenting academic. Oh, but bicycles are banned.

I didn't nominate Cornmarket; someone else did. It came in first runner-up. Apparently it is only the second ugliest street in Britain. I happily noted that my grumpiness was almost officially Well Founded.

Unlike Cambridge, Britain's other great college town, Oxford is no longer fundamentally a medieval city. Its favored position on the River Thames means that it has always attracted as much industry — automobile in the 20th century — as scholarship, though in the run-down housing projects at the edge of the city these days there is probably more joy riding than test driving. There remain extraordinarily beautiful buildings — from the serene quadrangles of the oldest colleges to the elegant Victorian ironwork of the Natural History Museum and the hard angles and glass of the new institute that houses American studies — but it sometimes feels as if every fine thing stands next to something jarring or ugly or corrupt. And what is indeed beautiful is either so full of people trying to admire it (the tourists) or use it (the students) that there is no hope of simply standing back and looking.

So, sometimes, as I round the corner from Cornmarket onto Broad Street, I want to reject grumpiness, however well-founded, and remember instead my first view of the city. I arrived 24 years ago, a Marshall Scholar from Harvard (whose "river houses" are heavily influenced by the collegiate structure of Oxford). Finding no elevators or porters in the train station, I heaved two enormous suitcases up one flight of stairs, over the bridge that spanned the tracks, down the next flight, and, streetside, hailed a taxi. We drove through the town and up Broad Street. On my left, the corner of St. John's College, then Balliol and Trinity. On my right, the massive stone heads of Roman emperors guarding the Old Ashmolean, now the Museum of the History Science, and behind it a glimpse of the cupola of the Sheldonian Theatre, the work of the young Christopher Wren. At last my own college, Hertford, where I learned what I should have suspected from my Latin — that the "porters" that every college still boasts are there to hang about the doorway, not to assist with luggage. At Hertford all the finest architecture is early 20th century, but I was to occupy an undistinguished 18th-century bit up in the eaves.

My corner of the college had been gutted and redone completely on the inside, though the outside, like so much of Oxford, was unchanged and (legally at least) unchangeable. Apparently no one thought, in redoing the whole interior, that it was worth indulging in central heating, and my tiny room boasted simply a narrow bed, wardrobe, and washbasin — simple furniture indeed and a world cold and stony enough to keep me wholly focused on the medieval monk who was the subject of my research.

But I had something more — a view of the very sky-edge of Oxford. All grumpiness dissolves as I, years later, recall the cold Sunday twilights of my first winter when the chapel bells of some 30 colleges rang changes for an hour, the call to evensong. I flung open the window and welcomed the chimes sounding across dozens of rooftops and spires. ■■■

Julia Gibert works for the Rhodes Trust in Oxford. She is the author of the novel *Outward and Visible Signs* (Viking).

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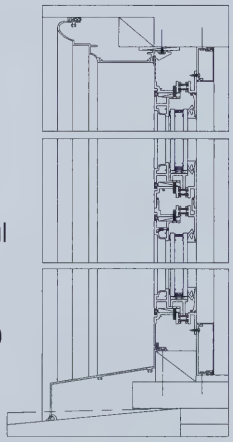

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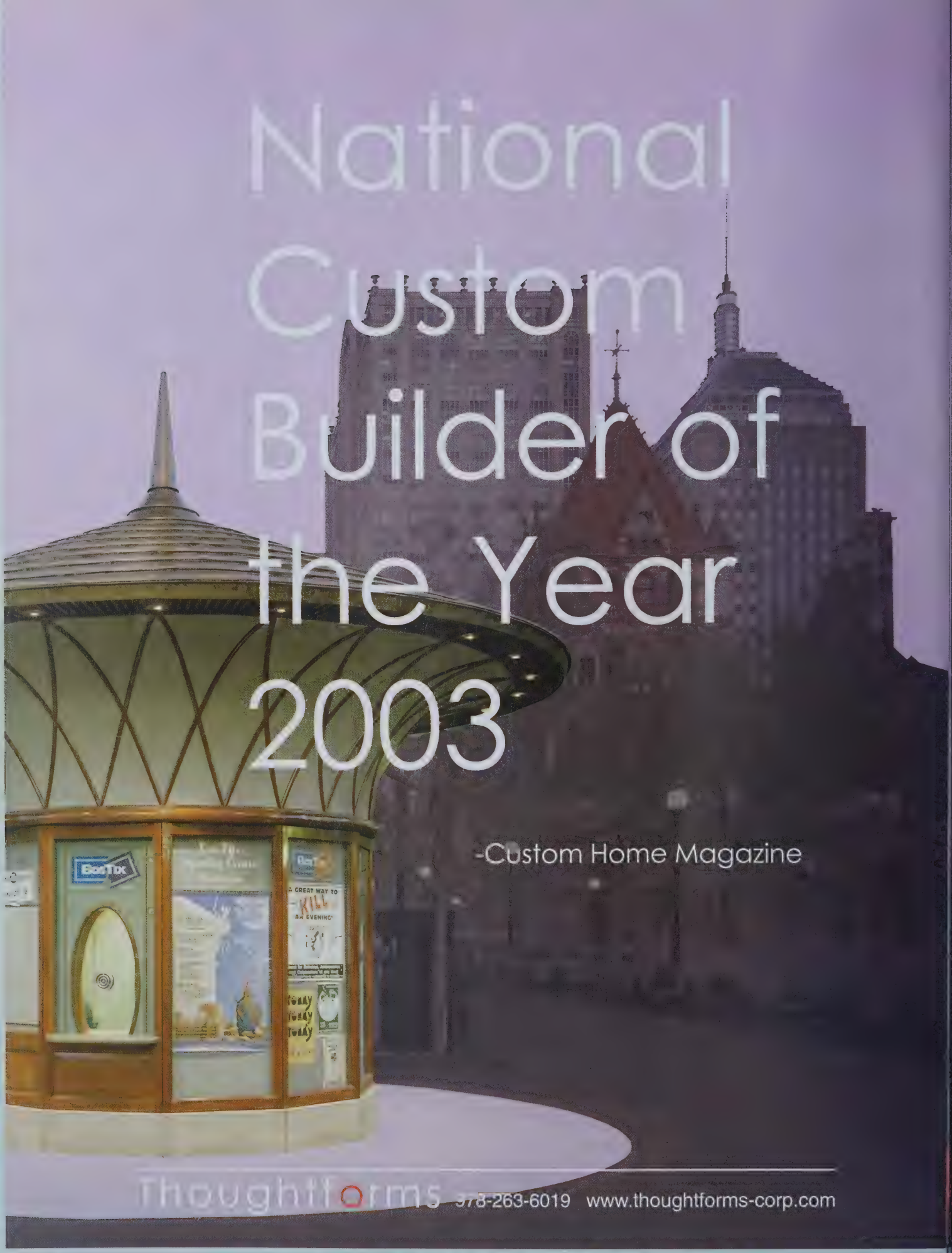
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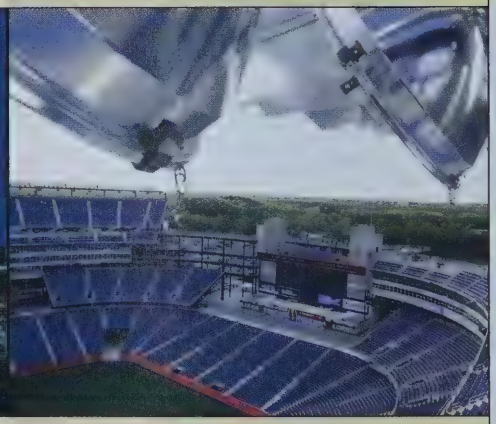

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ArchitectureBoston

November/December 2003

Spirit

Architects are at their most pathetic when they scramble to justify their existence. Trying desperately to be all things to all people, they defend their ability to "add value" even as they produce increasingly idiosyncratic work and pursue the peculiar strategy of disengaging themselves from popular culture. If they paid more attention to popular culture, they might discover that society really does want architects. In fact, the public is quite clear about what it wants from architects: beautiful buildings that mean something.

Meaning, of course, is the sticking point. Many architects would protest that their buildings do have meaning. The problem is that the public isn't interested in the messages they're offering.

The unyielding focus on the World Trade Center site offers insight on what the public does want to hear and therefore offers an unprecedented opportunity to influence the future of architecture. Those who viewed the public rejection of the first development proposals as a call for bold new design missed the point. The public was not clamoring for a 1,776-foot building, nor for technical gymnastics, nor for a rebranding of the New York skyline. The public wanted a building that said something profound about the terrible things that had happened, a building that addressed questions about life, death, and the human condition.

Libeskind's stalagmites will someday be viewed as a circa 2000 period piece. They will have more historical significance if they can also be viewed as the moment when "spirit" re-entered the architectural lexicon and when architects reached deep into pre-history to rediscover the roots of the impetus to build. In honoring the site of the towers as sacred ground, we are following an instinct as old as humankind. In wanting to build high, we are following an urge almost as old, to reach skyward beyond our own limitations.

It is hard to talk about spirit. Instead, we use words like awe, mystery, joy, the ineffable. Spirit is sometimes about religion, but not always. It is sometimes about spectacle, but not always. We talk about human spirit and community spirit, but we also acknowledge spiritual forces greater than ourselves. The question of how to build places that have the power to sustain and nurture a sense of spirit without settling for mere theater is a difficult but worthy one.

We live in uncertain times. But as architect Julian Bonder notes in these pages, "Uncertainly should not lead us to think that we should represent uncertainty or chaos through buildings and landscapes. Uncertainty should lead us to a certain choice, and choice is not 'whatever.'"

To design is to make choices. We can choose to pursue the stylistic tours-de-force that are now available to us through new technologies and new materials. Or we can choose a much tougher assignment: to put those tools to a higher purpose, to make places of enduring meaning.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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Spirit
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Letters

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We invite story ideas that connect architecture to social, cultural, political, economic, or business trends. Editorial guidelines are posted at: www.architectureboston.com

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Your July/August issue featuring Peabody Terrace truly hit home with me. I lived there for two years and found my own experiences and observations reflected in your articles, especially the idea that it is a building loved by architects and hated by almost everyone else.

I'm no architect, and I was almost in tears when I first saw my third-floor apartment. Still squinting from the bright August sun, I looked at the box-cluttered interior and could only think, "It's so dark and ugly!"

Even when my eyes adjusted to the dim light, I saw little to improve my first impression. It was always dark inside, even on the sunniest days. The flooring was also dark, a speckled charcoal grey linoleum. It hid dirt so well that I often lost my dust pile *as I was sweeping*, and had to get down on my hands and knees to find it again, a mountain of dust rising above the pitted floor.

The ceiling amazed and still amazes me; I could hardly believe that concrete, poured on a patchwork frame of cheap plywood and showing joint lines, blots, and even little "footballs" where knots in the wood had been excised, would be an intentional design choice. Walls were full of odd little outcroppings and built-in units, which made furniture placement a challenge. Closets were small, rooms were small, and the kitchen seemed to be an afterthought, stuck hurriedly onto one of the living-room walls. Faced with a two-by-two stove and four feet of counter space, I mourned the full, sunny kitchen I had left behind.

Inside and out, I found it to be a tacky, ugly little place, reminiscent of 1960s public housing projects. I didn't think anyone could disagree, but at a dinner party I realized I was wrong. I was sighing about my new home to my table companion; he was an architect and was truly shocked that I could be anything less than delighted to have the honor of living in Peabody Terrace. "But it was designed by Sert!" he cried. "And it's still small, dark, and ugly!" I replied. His parting words to me, in a tone of earnest pity, were: "I hope you come to appreciate living in Peabody Terrace."

I never came to honor the space as he did, but I can honestly say I came to appreciate many aspects of the space: the neatness of its design, smoothly incorporating varied apartment sizes and therefore varied family sizes, like so many interlocking puzzle pieces; the way it integrated home space, child care, play space, common space and park areas into the community of apartments; it truly made the most of the space it occupied and the surrounding area. I even came to love parts of it, especially my balcony, which was at tree-crown level and faced a maple-lined walkway to the river. It was breezy and cool in the summer and brilliant in the autumn, and always gave me a peaceful place to view the Charles.

I'm living in Arizona now, drenched in sunlight and seeking dark shady spaces. As I read your last issue, I felt a wave of nostalgia and affection for my old home. I may never come to love it as architects seem to, but I can appreciate the beauty of its design. If only that beauty could have incorporated beauty as defined by the community, it could be a building loved by all. I suppose that is the ongoing challenge of architectural design.

Christa Torrens
Cottonwood, Arizona

The juxtaposition of the love/hate articles about Peabody Terrace in your July/August 2003 issue is an excellent illustration of what I consider to be the most important issue regarding the future of the architectural profession. I believe that architects, as is the case in other fine arts, have lost the consumer — not the client, but the *users* of the product. Although there is popular appreciation for the amenities of post-World War II buildings, there is little affection for the architecture. Popular affection for a product leads to demand. If architectural consumers start to like architecture again, they will demand it and architectural clients will provide it. This is the design challenge for the architecture of the 21st century.

Willy Sclarsic AIA
President, Wingate Real Estate Strategies
Needham, Massachusetts

Your "Education" issue [September/October 2003] neglected to cover one very important issue, which is the education of architects relative to the building envelope and building science.

The schools are not providing sufficient education in the areas of the building enclosure and the relevant building science. Practitioners in the Boston area find that their staffs often don't understand the principles governing the design of building envelopes and the control of heat, air and, especially, moisture (both liquid and water vapor). The schools should be educating architects about the principles and technology of building envelopes and the relevant building science.

For most facilities, the primary physical component involving liability for architects is the building envelope. It interacts with the mechanical system, which conditions the interior space, as well as with the exterior environment and its variable weather, contributing to the mega-liability area of indoor air quality. The envelope — usually the image we show in our architectural journals — can and must be mastered by practicing architects. We run the risk of losing the business of being prime professionals for the performance (and maybe even the looks) of our buildings.

If architects can learn the discipline of building science, they have hope of managing indoor air quality. Moisture is the most important factor in regard to durability; according to insurer DPIC, 90 percent of claims against architects are moisture-related.

In March, the Boston Society of Architects' Building Envelope Committee voted to submit a Statement of Concern to the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) describing these concerns. The current criteria of the NAAB devote only one out of 37 criteria to the building envelope and *none* to building science.

Richard Keleher AIA, CSI, LEED
The Stubbins Associates
Chairman, BSA Building Envelope Committee
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Your roundtable discussion, "Declaring Victory: Practicing and Teaching" [September/October 2003], was a refreshing insight into teaching by practitioners. Your comment that the "old battle" isn't being fought anymore between the profession and the academy is very true.

An unofficial cease-fire started when our five national architecture organizations — AIA, AIAS, NCARB, ACSA and NAAB ("the collaterals") — came together to commission the 1996 report *Building Community, a New Future for Architecture and Practice,* researched and written by Ernest Boyer and Lee Mitgang of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Since the publication of *Building Community,* the collaterals have studied its text and each sees itself reflected in the criticism and praise. As a result, much has changed since 1996. The academy and the profession have developed more open communication as demonstrated by your panel of practicing educators. Nearly 100 submissions for the NCARB prize for the Creative Integration of Practice and Education in the Academy have been received. Schools have much more diverse faculties and student bodies now, even though the profession has not kept pace.

The climate for learning presented by your panel was very encouraging in its respect for students. This is in great contrast to the message in the recent publication, "The Redesign of Studio Culture — A Report of the AIAS Studio Culture Task Force" by the American Institute of Architecture Students. The report claims that the existing studio culture, mythical or not, can "lead to emotional, physical, and cultural deprivation." Perhaps the difference between the approach to teaching by your panel members and that described by the AIAS Task Force is that the panel members are all bringing the culture of practice to the classroom. That is often not the case.

I believe neither practice nor the academy can claim victory; rather, both should continue to recognize the strengths they can bring to one another.

Peter Steffian FAIA, NCARB
Chairman, Steffian Bradley Architects
Boston

As one who has recently finished the internship and registration exam process, I enjoyed reading the conversation between John Cary, Jr. and Jeff Stein ["Hearing Voices," September/October 2003]. It reminded me of the process I went through to become licensed.

Following the internship system established by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, a certain number of training units are required in each area. Once I knocked off all 700 total units from the 16 assorted categories, I was suddenly "educated" enough to take a licensing exam. It always struck me as amusing that I could achieve competency in the Programming training category after 10 training units and that it would take only 15 units to understand Engineering Systems Coordination. How does this account for our individual educational backgrounds? How can this system differentiate between the concepts which I learned quickly as opposed to those with which I struggle?

No feedback is given to those who have taken the test; all you receive is a pass or fail. I didn't feel any more or less competent to do my job once I received nine results that told me that I had passed an exam. I could now call myself an architect. But what had I actually learned from the entire process?

The inability to measure your true progress and development as a professional is perhaps one of the greatest shortcomings of the entire internship system. Each of us learns and processes information differently. I'm not suggesting that we do away with exams, but I am suggesting there needs to be a fundamental change in the way we ensure that all architects are exposed to some standard body of knowledge and concepts. It is appropriate that young designers have come together under the ArchVoices umbrella to make our voices heard. Kudos to those who contribute their time and energy to these informative, weekly newsletters.

Jessica Zlotogura AIA
New England Regional Associate Director,
National Associates Committee
Tsoi/Kobus & Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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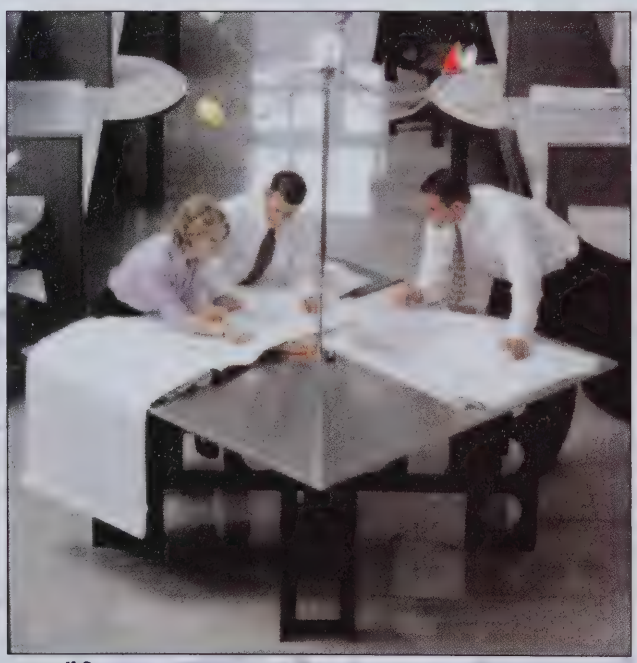

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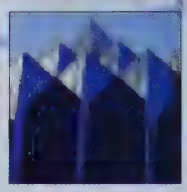

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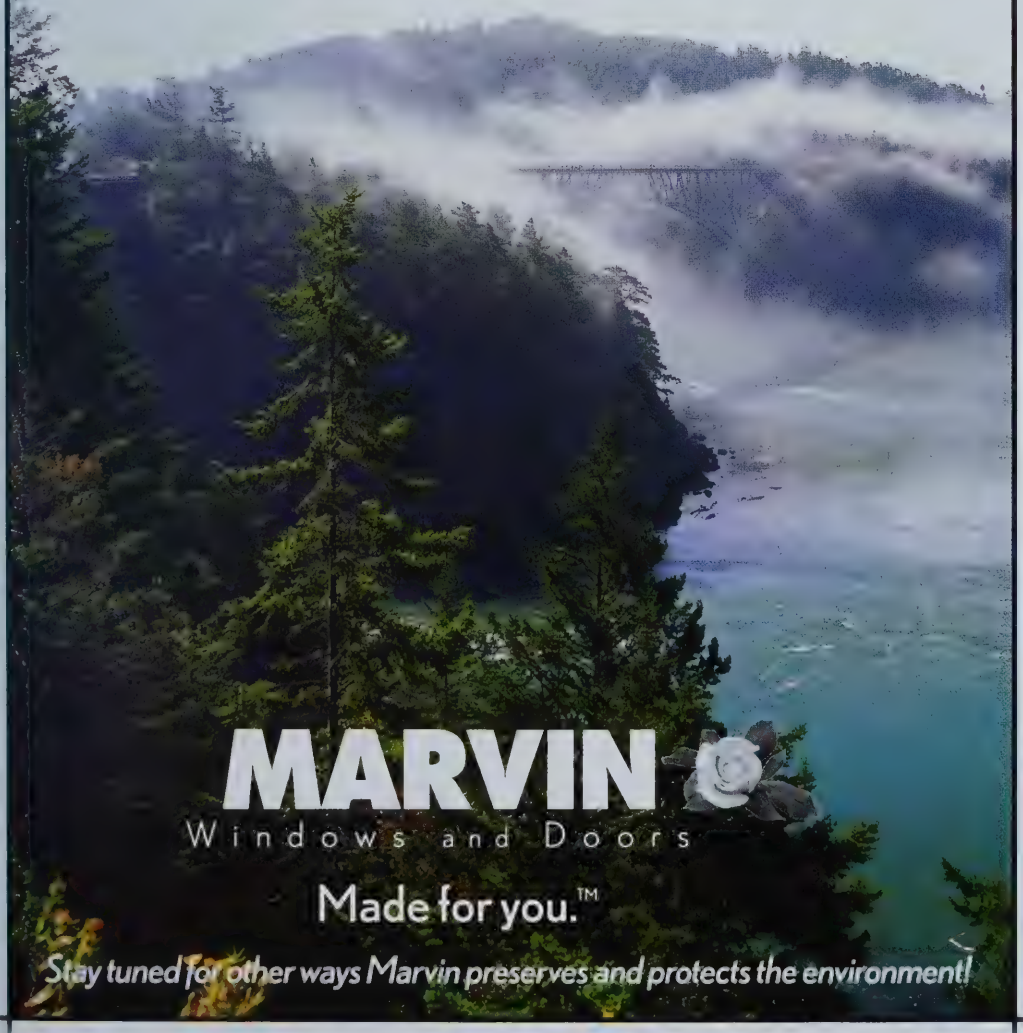

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Spirit of Place

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Phyllis Andersen is a Fellow for Cultural Landscape Studies of the Landscape Institute of the Arnold Arboretum in Boston and a member of the editorial board of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Julian Bonder, Assoc. AIA, established Julian Bonder + Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts, after practicing architecture in Argentina for ten years. He is an associate professor at Roger Williams University and the 2003-2004 Hyde Chair at the University of Nebraska.

Steven G. Cecil AIA, ASLA is a principal of The Cecil Group in Boston, a multi-disciplinary architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture firm.

Gary Hilderbrand is a principal of Reed/Hilderbrand Landscape Architects in Watertown, Massachusetts and an adjunct associate professor of landscape architecture at Harvard Design School.

The Reverend Bruce Jenneker is an associate rector and precentor at Trinity Church in Boston.

Henry Moss AIA is a principal at Bruner/Cott & Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: There has been a lot of discussion in the last 15 years or so about memorials, which has obviously become more intense as the debate about the World Trade Center site continues. I'm struck by the thought that the conversation about memorials offers a kind of justification for talking about architecture in a way that is quite different from the way we've been allowed — or trained — to talk about design. The discussion of memorials has allowed us to talk about making places that somehow transcend what we normally build, places that reach for bigger ideas than those that have occupied most architects recently — ideas about the nature of the human spirit and existence. The critic Robert Morgan wrote recently that postmodernism is fundamentally about the denial of transcendence; transcendence, he said, requires the context of time and history. We frequently talk about the age of irony, of cynicism, of skepticism, of relativism — all those things that define the modern age, all of which limit our ability to understand context deeply. Have we stripped ourselves of a vocabulary for talking about buildings and therefore for designing the environment in a more thoughtful, maybe richer, way?

STEVEN CECIL: I think "transcendence" is a good word, particularly in New England, with its tradition of transcendentalism. But trying to frame a conversation about spirit is a little bit like catching butterflies with a fishing net. It's not certain that talking about the experience of spirit in architecture is in fact the way to get at the problem.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: You're right — it's very hard to capture. And that's why, I think, words like awe and wonder and mystery end up coming into the conversation.

JULIAN BONDER: Architecture is always more interesting when it deals with something

photo courtesy Richmond National Battlefield Park

beyond what we actually see. Adolf Loos made the powerful observation that when we find a mound in the forest that is six feet by three feet, we become serious and something in us says, someone was buried here. That is architecture, he said. The idea that an unknown person is buried there confronts us with death, with that inevitable condition that we are all going to go away from this earth. Loos also suggested that only a small part of architecture belongs to art: the tomb and the monument. These forms don't represent a formal design problem or even a functional problem; they represent reminders of an ethical question that has to do with something beyond us. The places that have the kind of spirit we are discussing transcend themselves; they suggest something beyond themselves.

HENRY MOSS: In preparation for this conversation, I tried to think of places that have this kind of power. And I noticed that they fell into three categories. In the first group were a couple of Civil War battlefields: Cold Harbor ❶ and Antietam. Cold Harbor is only a cluster of trenches on one side of a field and a couple of Park Service plaques that tell you that 5,000 people were killed in seven minutes as they charged these trenches. There's really nothing there. And so if you don't know any of this, the place doesn't mean anything. It was easy to think of these kinds of semi-erased places in which you have all these stacked-up, hard-to-get-at histories that feel rich but are somehow connected to death. I thought, what about monuments to life? Grand Central Station came to me; that's a great terminus filled with anonymous people moving back and forth through it over long periods of time. And then I remembered something that Elizabeth Padjen once said at a conference about religious properties — she was talking about communal, tranquil places, and how rare they are. Churches offer that — the opposite of Grand Central. Is it a particular kind of space that makes them so effective, or is it simply that being with other people in a tranquil way is so rare? The third category had associations with important people, for example, Emily Dickinson's house. If you know what happened there, it's very moving. If you don't know what happened there, it's just another house in Amherst, Massachusetts. So for me, the issue constantly comes back to time and history, and the part that interests me most is the question whether there's not enough of this *genius loci*, whatever it is. And if there's not enough, what kind of spirit is missing most? It seems to me that you've got to connect to a place to have any of these experiences. Maybe people aren't as connected as they once were because they have lost time — they're moving faster through spaces; they don't live a whole lifetime in one place. We have all talked a lot about how one makes a monument at Ground Zero. I wonder about the opposite. Can you make a monument for places pulsing with life?

ELIZABETH PADJEN: I have noticed that we don't celebrate birthplaces the way we used to. We're all talking about memorials now, death places, but birthplaces aren't places that crowds go to. I agree with you on many points. You can look at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington. If you don't have knowledge, it's a big, shiny retaining wall. As I went through a similar exercise, I wondered about the ocean — what is it about the sea that often provokes a spiritual reaction? Standing on a beach, looking toward Portugal, you see nothing. That's one experience, and it does suggest infinity, eternity, and the power of nature. But the piece of coast that means more to me is Salem Sound, which I've lived near most of my life. What is interesting about the Sound is that when you look across the water, you also see land, you see structures, you even see some vistas that haven't changed substantially in a century or more, and so you're seeing layers of history. And

Places of spirit
Phyllis Andersen:

Ronchamp (interior)
by Le Corbusier

The Côte Sauvage
Brittany, France

Places of spirit
Julian Bonder, Assoc. AIA:

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas
by Louis Kahn

Salk Institute, La Jolla, California
by Louis Kahn

Igualada Cemetery, Barcelona
by Enric Miralles

Mémorial des Martyrs de la Déportation, Paris
by Georges-Henri Pingusson

photo © Barnaby Evans

when you know something about it, it is a place that acquires meaning. You know about the number of shipwrecks there. You know the tragedies. You know about the people who set off from that place to go to China and other parts of the world. These layers of information piled on top of this landscape make it special.

PHYLLIS ANDERSEN: Do you think that has to do with the relationship of geological formation to architecture — to the ability both have to invoke similar responses of awe and wonder? For example, the place names of Yosemite have religious overtones, sometimes even terms that relate to religious architecture, such as Cathedral Rock. It's a point that John Sears makes in his book *Sacred Places* [see page 61]. I have a similar reaction to yours — the coastal sites that I find really powerful are all those with some sort of relationship to the human form, but also an overwhelming geological formation — the Côte Sauvage in Brittany and the Maine coast, for example.

GARY HILDERBRAND: It strikes me that one could group these kinds of evocations into two categories. One is rooted in knowledge, where your response to a place is a function of something you know, which you can translate into feeling. But Yosemite is an example of a place that elicits an almost unconditioned response that has almost nothing to do with knowledge. Actually, the notion of the unconditioned response is more of a 19th-century idea; I think many people today would say that the observer is never really "unconditioned." But I believe that the unconditioned response is still possible and, as a landscape architect, I find that it's quite crucial in our work. We can elicit qualities and characteristics that are moving and emotive that don't require a learned response. And so the comment about transcendence requiring context and history is troublesome to me. I think it is possible to have a transcendent experience without a lot of conditioning, simply through the manipulation of elements like the breeze and the sun, light, humidity, and the horizon, for example. The best example I can point to is a Modernist one: the work of Luis Barragán. In his acceptance address after winning the Pritzker Prize in 1980, he gave an incredible evocation about the things that were important in his work, that he felt mainly were qualities of transcendence that could indeed be built into works, and to which he believed you could have an almost universal response. He used words like "calm" and "serenity," which were the qualities he sought. Universality itself is a Modernist notion, something we'd now see as a 20th-century idea. But the medium of landscape can produce those qualities without dependence on historical context or prior experience.

JULIAN BONDER: Which brings up the story of Barragán's contribution to Kahn's Salk Institute courtyard, which at some point in the design was full of trees. It was Barragán who suggested leaving it open to the sky and to the Pacific.

GARY HILDERBRAND: Louis Kahn was another figure in that mid-century period who sought to correct what we might call a bankruptcy of interest in the emotive.

BRUCE JENNEKER: This is a hard conversation to dig up vocabulary for, as we're all finding. I had to push to find the vocabulary after September 11, because immediately after September 11 and continuing even until now, the number of people who have turned to us for a more serious engagement with the life of faith has increased phenomenally. I think some of that is because so many of these are younger people who are in their late 20s and early 30s — their parents went to Woodstock and in the process discovered for

themselves a vocabulary, but divested themselves of a narrative history, of a mythological context, of a vocabulary for ritual. And so we have a number of people who don't have a vocabulary for certain kinds of experiences; the best they can do is to say that something is awe-inspiring. But they want more than that. They come to a special place or a special occasion and they say, "I am convinced this means something. Help me unpack that meaning." There is a Japanese aphorism that says, "The integrity of a vessel is the space it encloses." And the challenge for people like us — since I'm a designer, too, even though what I design with isn't as tangible and as lasting as what some of you design with — is the temptation to insist upon the validity of the vessel. But it's the space that the vessel encloses that has meaning, whether it's the mound in the wood or Salem Sound. Phyllis mentioned geology. There's the geology of stones and there's the archaeology of experience. And so the space of Salem Sound means something not because ships left from there. It means something because hearts were pulled in that place. And you stand there in the place of a torn heart and when you don't have the vocabulary for that experience, it doesn't matter whether you know that people left for China from there. But if you understand what the space evokes, then suddenly you find yourself in a place where you say, "Aha, this is what it means to be human." Ultimately, that's what people want to work out: what it means to be human. I think the manipulation of space, event, time, and context can attack and demolish the process whereby that evocation happens, as much as it can serve it splendidly. We are in need of a vocabulary for the interpretation of the gifts of transcendence that come to us, and we who are designers must serve that need. I of course see it as a religious opportunity, but it is an artistic opportunity, too.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: I agree that an evocative experience can be designed. I'll give an example — one that is also a good example of your vessel analogy: WaterFire ❷ in Providence, Rhode Island. WaterFire is both an event and a place. It was conceived by an artist, Barnaby Evans, as a series of nighttime events along the Providence River. It's really about the inside of the vessel, the vessel being the city. Barnaby choreographs the experience, using all the arts — music, visual, performing arts, elements that sometimes come from prehistory — while people dressed in black go down the river in boats and stoke floating braziers with wood — so the fire seems to float on the water. It takes aspects of ritual that we know from a variety of traditions, and it deliberately reaches across cultures and across time to make something that is primeval in many ways. Are we being manipulated by this very clever person in this very beautiful environment? Well, yes. But it is an example of designing not the environment itself, but the character of the environment.

STEVEN CECIL: But the question there is how much of that experience is theater. I think that it's mostly theater. Great theater — it's a wonderful way to spend the evening. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is great theater, but it's not architecture.

HENRY MOSS: And yet we're talking as designers about ways of creating strong emotions. Our relationship to the world is becoming more disembodied. I don't actually believe that walking around with a Walkman or being on the Internet in itself makes you any less connected with the world. But I believe that many things are somehow combining to make people less connected to the physical, spatial world. When Bruce talked about the vessel, I thought of the central courtyard in the Boston Public Library ❺, which I think is one of the most magical spaces in Boston. Nothing happens

photo © Steve Rosenthal

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there that anybody could characterize in terms of love, hate, hope, suffering — any obvious emotional reaction. There are some Windsor chairs, a statue, light, water, and a space. It's hard to imagine anyone walking through that place and scowling at it. It must be one of those unconditioned experiences Gary talked about. I don't even know what people feel when they're there, but it's something, and I bet everybody feels something fairly similar. And if I didn't believe that we could manipulate some of the context that creates that kind of experience, there would be no point in being a designer.

PHYLLIS ANDERSEN: As a non-designer talking to designers, I would like to hear more about the making of these places. How do you actually make these things? How do you manipulate material ideas? How can you transfer that knowledge? It would be enormously helpful to know. Of course, it might demystify the process, and then you run the risk demystifying yourself as a designer.

BRUCE JENNEKER: I like what you're saying. I became interested in architecture because I'm a ritualist and the creator of the theater of the religious experience — in my role as precentor, I am responsible for the music, the art, the ceremonial choreography, in short, for the aesthetic element of the church. And it became clear to me that the architectural reality was a threshold to a more powerful experience. I had to make the architects that I got to know quite drunk before they would have a real conversation with me about the architectural event as a threshold. I'd already learned that the way I experience distance and proportionality does something to me. I'm not sure of the psychology or the physics of that, but I know that the way I experience enclosure and dimension affects me. And I also know that things happen to me in the way I experience light. Now, some of that is because I grew up in the sun — I grew up in the Tropic of Capricorn, in South Africa. Living in New England is a very trying experience. But I began to discover that these things really matter. My background in the theater helps, but there is something quite different — and WaterFire may be an example — between a space that encloses a place and serves as a threshold, and a theatrical event or a ritual, important though those are. There's something unique about the way the architectural event serves as threshold. I've been in spaces where the architecture was not a threshold at all — it was an obstacle blocking you from some greater experience, from transcendence.

STEVEN CECIL: The question of how we can create these places, how we make something happen, comes from our rationalist approach to the world. We talk about the vessel all the time and not what's in it. But the tradition of spirit in architecture comes from the belief that there is something that we're evoking that is not about us. In other words, our rationalist approach is very anthropocentric: What am *I* doing to make something happen? Whereas if I as a designer go back to the idea of the *genius loci* — the spirit of the place — then I must believe that there is a spirit already here in this place, and my job is to reveal it. I didn't make it. I didn't bring it here. My job is not to capture it but to celebrate it. I don't believe in little spirits in the rocks, but at the same time, this is not about the human spirit. Finding that spirit, that meaning, leads you to a totally different stance in the creation of an architecture or landscape architecture. And that is the architecture that excites me. And so, if I go to Salem and walk into the Witch Trials memorial 3, and I'm from another culture and don't know anything about witches, I still know I'm in a pretty darn special place and I'll stop and think about it.

Places of spirit
Steven Cecil AIA, ASLA:

Chapel of St. Ignatius at Seattle University
by Steven Holl FAIA

State House, Boston
by Charles Bulfinch

Rowes Wharf, Boston
by Adrian Smith FAIA/SOM Chicago

Witch Trial Memorial
Salem, Massachusetts
by James Cutler FAIA and Maggie Smith

Places of spirit
Gary Hilderbrand:

The Pantheon

Courances
France

Wellfleet
Massachusetts

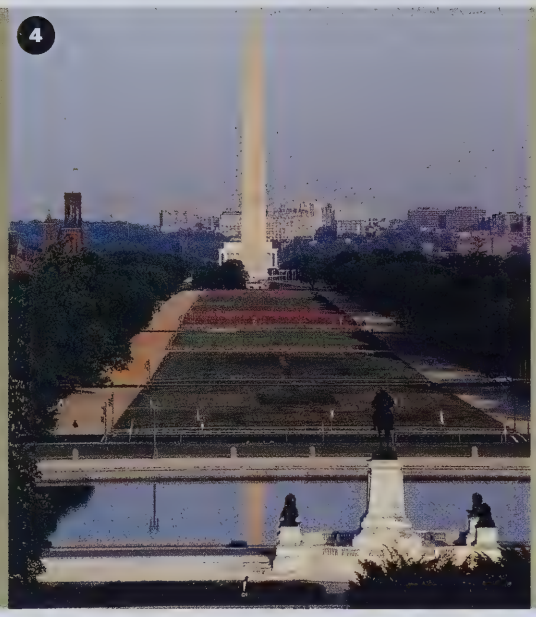
JULIAN BONDER: That's a very important point. It's almost as though what we do is to make an offering. And that suggests a kind of communication with the place itself, a kind of dialogue. I like to think that we establish architectural conversations — dialogues with history, with people, with place, even with some events that may be traumatic. I am collaborating with the artist Krzysztof Wodiczko on a project for a memorial for the abolition of slavery in Nantes, France. Part of our work is to create and to reveal layers of meaning. The question is not only how the buildings and spaces can speak, but also how these spaces can become "frames" for people to speak today. Speech is the point — how to foster the appearance of the traumatized voices of others.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: Speech brings us again to the overlay of some kind of narrative onto a space. Some communication, some knowledge, some story or history. I'm intrigued by the notion that has emerged. On the one hand, there are places that require an overlay of narrative. And on the other hand, it may be possible to create places that in themselves have an inherent quality of the ineffable. I'd like to go back to Phyllis' question, which I think is very valid: What are the tools that we use to create these kinds of spaces? We talked about light. Manipulation of scale is another one.

HENRY MOSS: Discontinuity is another. Somehow it's really important. By that I mean discontinuity from our everyday life, an experience that takes people away from their daily life and obligations and confronts them with something new. Another is low light levels that have to do with a sense of mystery. I put an organ case into a church in Durham in the north of England. We spent hours trying to lower the light levels just enough so that people couldn't quite tell, even in daylight, where the organ case ended and the ceiling began. And it really made all the difference. I think hearing voices from unseen locations, having light come in from places that you don't understand, are important tools that you can use. Atmospheric changes can be quite profound in landscapes. And those are all scaleless.

BRUCE JENNEKER: I think that we are called not only to know the tools and to understand their possibilities, but also to be in some sort of relationship with the tools. I'm thinking of a floral artist, whom I love watching work. She takes forever to do a flower arrangement. Not because it takes her a long time to put the flowers in. But she'll look at the bucket of floral material, and it will take her a long time to choose one. And then she will stand with it. She looks at the vase, and she looks at the space. For a long time. I'm a flower arranger, too, but I move my flowers around 20 times. She'll take that one flower and she'll put it in one place, and it will stay there. And then she'll choose the next one. There's a sense that she knows what the message of each of these elements is, and she knows what the message of that space is. And when it's done, which takes six hours, sometimes it's bouffy and huge, and sometimes it's three flowers and a leaf. But it's perfect for the space. She is totally engaged with the moment, the place, the materials, and the techniques of snipping and wiring or whatever. I think the real challenge of our time is not to deliver the product but to be the student, to let the tools and the materials teach what their possibilities might be, rather than our exploiting their potential.

STEVEN CECIL: That sounds similar to the traditions of *ikebana*, Japanese flower arranging. It's highly formalized, but each arrangement is designed for a particular place. You cannot pick up an *ikebana* arrangement and put it on the other side of the room. And that suggests another tool we have at our disposal: point of view. If you look at the Vietnam



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Places of spirit

The Reverend Bruce Jenneker:

Chapel of St. Ignatius at Seattle University
by Steven Holl FAIA

The Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln
Switzerland

Fraumünster, Zurich

Abbey Church, Le Mont St. Michel

Sainte Chappelle, Paris

Abbey Church at St. John's Abbey, Minnesota
by Marcel Breuer

Chapel at Notre-Dame-Du-Haut at Ronchamp
by Le Corbusier

Memorial from the air, it doesn't mean very much. It requires a specific point of view, and it requires movement. Movement is itself a key to many of the spaces we're talking about. If you were beamed into the middle of Chartres Cathedral, you'd be impressed. But you need the procession through the space to discover the evocative experience that is otherwise hidden.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: When Henry first mentioned discontinuity, I thought of it in a spatial sense, the discontinuity of going from narrow space to large space, for example. And that also suggests procession. Let me put two examples on the table — places that have some of the characteristics we've been talking about. In some respects they're more alike than you might imagine. The Hancock tower in Boston and the Mall in Washington, DC 4. Would you call them evocative places?

STEVEN CECIL: I'm fascinated by what L'Enfant did when he laid out Washington. He was very conscious of the topography, very conscious of the orientation and the relationship to the river and to Arlington. He had a complete grasp of the way visual connections are made. Put the Mall someplace else and it wouldn't work. It's all about place and space. Whereas the geometry that generated the Hancock tower — wonderful building that it is — seems to me very trivial in the scale of things.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: I'm picking on these two places for a few reasons. One is that they're examples of some of the tools we talked about: size, scale, light. The Mall is on the one hand one of the most designed sites in this country, for the reasons Steve just mentioned, but at the same time one of the most underdesigned spaces. The Hancock tower is not a space, but a highly crafted object that seems to elicit a visceral response from all kinds of people who find it beautiful.

GARY HILDERBRAND: My reaction is the opposite of Steve's. I find the Hancock tower to be a beautifully honed object that is invested in a set of forces that were conjured in the shaping of that building. I don't think of it has having qualities of spirit as we've been using the term, but it fascinates me as an item of cultural production. As for the Mall, I agree that the plan emerged from a profound set of observations about the characteristics of the site and an understanding of how we see and perceive space. It is a remarkable invention, in terms of how it presents ideas about the way a society and its institutions could be built. It is clearly an Enlightenment idea. What we see today, though, is in fact more the result of work by the MacMillan Commission around 1900. When I go to the Washington Mall, I'm conditioned by my anecdotal knowledge of all the elements that have formed it, and then I'm really disappointed in the way that it looks today. Its great vision hasn't been well tended. It seems too big, too windy, too trampled. There are too many cars. My intellectual sensibility about it gets frustrated by the realities of the problems that are visited upon it every day by the fact that it's mainly a tourist destination.

PHYLLIS ANDERSEN: Unfortunately, the sublime can slip into the banal very easily. That is an issue: how do you sustain the sublime? I agree with you; I have the same reaction to the Mall. It's banal. It's also home to an increasing number of memorials, which pose a very difficult question. We now seem to have a set of rituals for memorializing. Because of the number of people involved in creating memorials, each new space has its own, rather large community of people who in various ways share an experience and maybe unconsciously veer into these memorializing rituals. How can a designer transcend the banal in these cases and at least reach for the sublime?

Places of spirit
Henry Moss AIA:

Cold Harbor Civil War Battlefield
Virginia

Boston Public Library Courtyard
Boston

Grand Central Station Terminal Hall
New York City

Emily Dickinson's house
Amherst, Massachusetts

JULIAN BONDER: The question of the sublime is problematic because it deals with questions of beauty, when many of these memorials are often about fear and horror. I don't think we can or should deal with them in terms of aesthetics. We should instead filter them in the light of ethics, through the lens of the uncanny, and through notions of "ugliness." Ugliness not the opposite of beauty. And that is one of the interesting aspects of the Hancock tower — it can be read in the light of ugliness, as an object out of place. Aside from its many architectural qualities, that is what makes it powerful. It suggests a new dimension to the city, that Boston itself at some point accepted that there could be something different. The Mall seems to embody the notion of available land, and that is its biggest problem: If this is available land, then let's start plopping memorials on it. And of course every constituency calls for one.

STEVEN CECIL: The thing that fascinates me about Washington is the fit between the geography that it had and the geography that was created — it's much more interesting than simply placing objects on a site. I think the Mall today is like a scratchy record of a great piece of music. You're still responding to that piece of music. You hate that it's so darned scratchy.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: And I love the fact that it's so scratchy. When I go to Washington, I always go to the Mall. We talked about rituals; this is mine. I walk out and stand in the middle. I look to the left, I look to the right. I get a sense of it, I absorb it. And then I look at all the stuff that people are doing. They're wearing their T-shirts and eating their hotdogs and chasing their kids who are chasing the dogs who are chasing the Frisbees. No, the grass isn't tended, and it's unprogrammed. But I love the spirit of the place. It seems to me that it's America's front yard, but we're all comfortable there. All this activity happens in what is by all other measures a very sacred space, in terms of its history, its design, and its intended symbolism. I love the fact that anyone who comes to that place can claim it. It's not quite the same as, say, Copley Square, which is also very active, filled with people eating, napping, even skateboarding. Perhaps it's the presence of Trinity Church that makes the difference. It's Trinity's front yard. And of course, Trinity is a destination in itself for thousands of tourists.

BRUCE JENNEKER: Something like three quarters of a million people.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: That's an extraordinary number. More than the population of Boston. What do you think is drawing them?

BRUCE JENNEKER: A lot of people come because they know about it — they know something about H.H. Richardson and the architecture or they know about the engineering. But a lot of people come because it's so unusual in America for a great church to command a great city square. St. Patrick's doesn't have that. St. John the Divine doesn't have it. Grace Cathedral doesn't really have it. There's hardly another church in this country that has a piazza in front of it like the one at Notre Dame or even at St. Paul's in London. The building asserts itself on the square, and it's a powerful statement. There's an apocryphal story about Richardson and Phillips Brooks, the rector at that time, walking down the diagonal of Huntington Avenue; the site was still clear and the design was up for grabs. Richardson reportedly said to Phillips Brooks, "What do you want people to say when they come here for the first time?" And Phillips Brooks, with his love of modernity, reportedly answered, "I don't want them to say a thing. I want them to sing, 'A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing...'" And in a way that really does happen. You walk across the

Places of spirit
Elizabeth Padjen FAIA:

Witch Trial Memorial
Salem, Massachusetts
by James Cutler FAIA and Maggie Smith

The National Mall
Washington, DC

Salem Sound

First Parish Church
Lincoln, Massachusetts

square, and there is this mighty fortress. But then it serves as a threshold into a totally different space. And a totally different experience. Whereas the outside of the building is massive and masculine, the inside of the building is feminine and open and womblike. And I think that's another piece that draws people there.

GARY HILDERBRAND: I've wondered if people are drawn to the non-liturgical, non-ecclesiastical aspects of the building as much as to the fact that it's a church. It seems as much a theater, almost an opera house, in the way that so much is focused on the crossing, far forward of where the liturgy takes place. And to sit there in the congregation always seemed to me to be like getting a box in the theater. It suggests the beginning of a movement away from strictly ecclesiastical form to one that's more about ceremony and public engagement, that is perhaps more secular in character.

BRUCE JENNEKER: You're absolutely right. Phillips Brooks was trying to find a secular vocabulary for transcendence, and his partners in that effort were Richardson and La Farge, who did the murals and many of the stained-glass windows. They were trying to find a secular vocabulary for Christianity in the context of modernity. Your comment about the theater box is also true for the congregation and for the preacher, too. It is the coziest pulpit in Christendom. If you stand in the pulpit, you feel as though you can touch every single person in that room. No one is beyond your arm's reach. It is the most uncanny thing. I've preached in some of the grandest pulpits in the Anglican Communion, and I haven't had that feeling. I think it's one reason why Phillips Brooks had such a huge following here, because people tend to relate to the preacher and Trinity has this intimacy. Which is another piece of that secular vocabulary. Phillips Brooks asked La Farge to put two murals in the church that would tell the meaning of the church and its vocation as you come in. They illustrate two Bible stories, which represented for Phillips Brooks the major concerns and challenges of Christianity in his time: the questions "Do I belong here? Is there a place for me?" and "Can there be meaning in life?" And so on one side is the story of the woman at the well — the woman who had had many husbands and was rejected by her community because she tried to find happiness and joy and intimacy. And across from it is the story of the lawyer, who came to Jesus at night and said, "What must I do to be saved?" I think those two images shape the experience of the people in the room even when they don't know how to interpret them; they communicate something.

GARY HILDERBRAND: Let's go back to the question of why visitors come to Trinity in such great numbers. Let's assume they come without a connection to the stories you just described and without a connection to the historical significance of this particular church, which represents an important moment in modernity. Do you think the visitors can read all that?

BRUCE JENNEKER: It's hard for me to answer. My perception is that the visitors come because of this articulation of significance at the end of Copley Square. I think that's the threshold. Once they go through it, they find all kinds of things. But I think they come first because when they look at the building, they know that the space that is enclosed by those walls matters.

JULIAN BONDER: But that may be the case of many of the cathedrals or churches we normally visit when we go to Europe. What strikes me as very interesting, being from another faith, is the question you raised, "Do I belong here?" It comes back to the idea of intimacy, of speech, of dialogue, of meeting

photo courtesy Boston Public Library

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face-to-face. It comes back to Steve's point about whether our work is about others or about ourselves. It comes back to the question of the tools that are available to us to create certain conditions. It comes back to our discussion of the Mall, because the Mall is a place that says all of us of belong there. And that all ultimately brings us to the question, how can designers make spaces that tell us all that we could belong there?

ELIZABETH PADJEN: I can offer an example of a building that was intended to do just that. Go to the other side of Copley Square, to McKim's Boston Public Library 5. It was built as a "palace for the people." Like Trinity, it conveys a message, an idea, although a wholly secular one. And although the architecture is quite different, the designer used similar tools — the layering of media and art, texts, procession. It has its own kind of secular liturgy in some respects.

PHYLLIS ANDERSEN: I think there are many library spaces that convey the kind of spirit we've been talking about: Bates Hall at the BPL, the Library of Congress reading room, the reading room at the New York Public Library. Not all the reading rooms I've been in have it; some are just pompous. But others offer a marvelous, democratic experience. There is a sense of awe, but often also a sense of intimacy. And there is always the understood ritual of how you behave. It's the respectful consideration of other people.

ELIZABETH PADJEN: They also remind us of things — ideas, events, history, people, the sheer accumulation of knowledge — that are beyond us, that are greater than we are.

HENRY MOSS: But there's still something missing at the Boston Public Library, and that is the ineffability of what one experiences at Trinity, particularly as you go from the outside to the inside. By comparison, the McKim building is full of predictable spaces, and the behaviors are predictable, and it's easy to imagine when you go in there what that hierarchy is going to be. I love Richardson's scale jumps, which are these extraordinary leaps from one scale to another. The thing that amazes me about Trinity is that once you've seen this great fortress, this mountain of a building, you go in and it's domestic. The discontinuity is supportive, both for an individual and then for this extraordinary community. I think that's what Kahn did at his best. He made these communal spaces, even where nobody expected them or wanted them, like the Exeter Library. The students are just going in to get a book to do their homework. And yet here's this grand image of the community somehow in the middle of that.

JULIAN BONDER: And yet both Richardson and McKim lived in a world of greater certainty than ours. We see an uncertain world laid here before us — politically, economically, you name it. What then is the contribution of designers in such a world? What can we offer? And for me, the answer has to do with the ethical weight of choice. Uncertainty should not lead us to think that we should represent uncertainty or chaos through buildings and landscapes. Uncertainty should lead us to a certain choice, and choice is not "whatever."

STEVEN CECIL: We spend years learning how to form things, but I think the better word is "transform." To transform is really something different. And I think it begins with an attitude on the part of the designer, an understanding of the difference between providing and offering. And the result is not about making a statement. It's about creating a place where a statement can occur.

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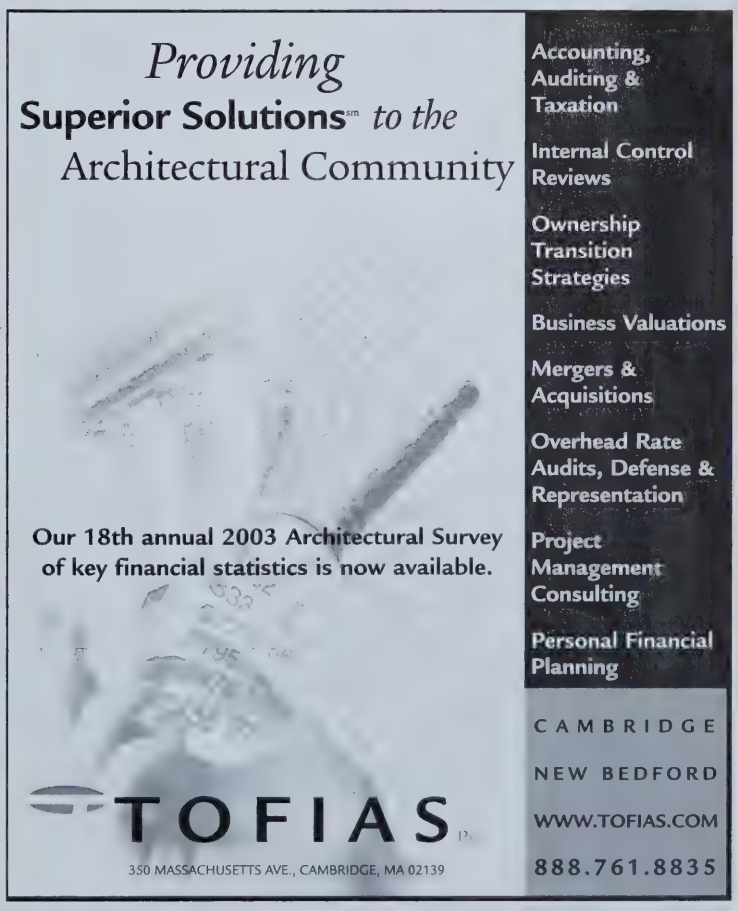
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Ode to a Vent:
In Praise of Honesty

by Otile McManus

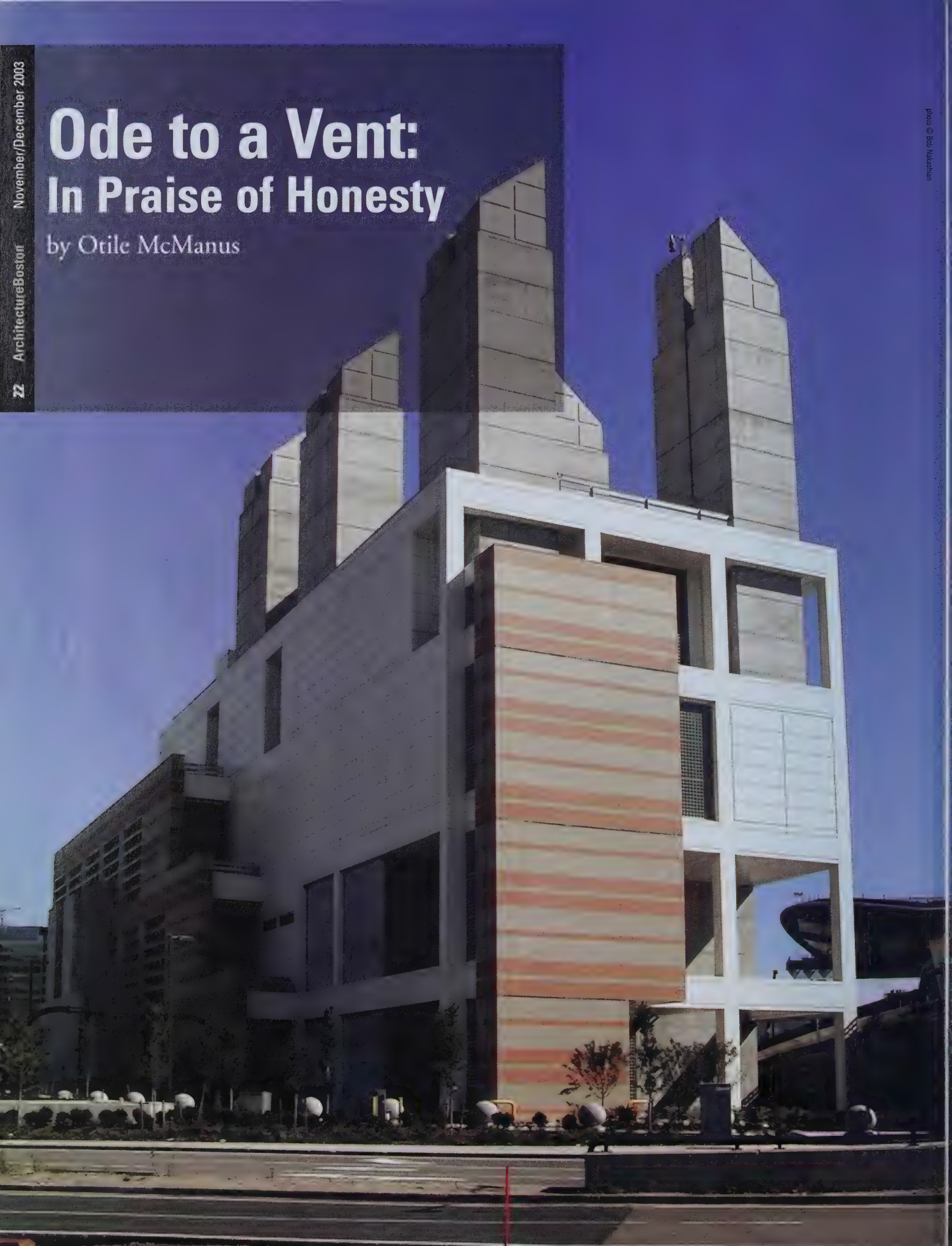


photo © Bob Nakashian

Rising from the Commonwealth Flats in South Boston, six chamfered chimney stacks, 18 stories high, soar skyward. Bands of orange and buff brick wrap massive metal panels that intersect expanses of exposed concrete. The building face is interrupted only by rectilinear glass-block portals and, on two sides, by a series of immense teal-green louvers.

More than the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge or the new tunnels or the seven-and-a-half mile web of new highway coursing under Boston, this new structure — Vent Building 5 — brings the Big Dig to life. For me, the building is a visible manifestation of all the logarithms and computer drawings, of all the planning and designing, of all the digging and filling, of all the money and labor and time and politics that created the $15 billion engineering marvel that is the Central Artery and Tunnel Project.

Vent Building 5 is huge; it is new; it is bold; it is raw; it is unadorned. It animates the very palpable reality of the almost inconceivable changes to Boston's infrastructure that have occurred as the city has gone about its business for the past 15 years. The building shows just what it takes to put hundreds of thousands of cars underground daily — drawing fresh air in, spewing bad air out, lungs for the new highway below.

In Boston, where so much new architecture is contrived, each of the seven new vent buildings has a certain integrity that challenges conventional wisdom, but Vent Building 5 has something more elemental. Because it is more visible than the other vent buildings, it has monumental presence.

It is out there, up there, unavoidably in Boston's face. Strong and sculptural, here and now, this is a brand-new building without a context — set in wide-open, virgin territory — defying the lockstep notion that new architecture in this city has to match the existing architecture of the past. This is a building that embodies the potential of this newest of our neighborhoods.

But many Bostonians don't see it this way. Although enthusiastic crowds — literally hundreds of thousands — lined up to walk across the Zakim Bridge and through the Liberty Tunnel last year, Vent Building 5 has been subject to abuse and criticism. Editorial writers, columnists, and newspaper reporters have sneered and piled on the negatives. Artists, environmentalists, and local residents have complained that the new structure looks like a nuclear power plant and is the laughing stock of South Boston. Politicians, including City Councilor James Kelley, have been disparaging; and Governor Mitt Romney is said to have called it "the ugliest building in Boston" during the 2002 election campaign.

Vent Building 5 stands out because it stands alone. It looms large, a tyrannosaurus rex to the convention center's brontosaurus, in the words of an architect involved in developing the design standards for the Big Dig. Under construction since 1992, it is still a new kid on the block — or at least what passes for a block in this section of the city that is still very much a work in progress.

Does this explain why the resistance to Vent Building 5 has been so great? Because the building is so new? So overscaled? So prominently located? So concrete? Is it because traditional Bostonians have been traditionally allergic to change in certain spheres? We not only have our hats, be we also have our red brick and gold leaf.

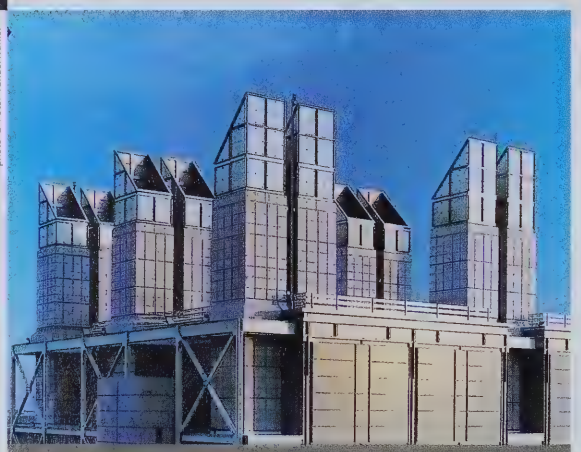
What's puzzling here is that Bostonians do pay homage to infrastructure once it's been incorporated into the collective civic imagination. The architecture that we now treasure in the Back Bay went up slowly, building by building, block by block, as the fetid swampland was filled. The vigor and grace of the Northern Avenue Bridge has recently been reaffirmed, almost 100 years after its construction. It will be retained as a bona fide bridge, but only after demolition was threatened for years. We have managed to accept harder-to-love public projects when they are viewed at a comfortable distance across space or time, like the Deer Island treatment-plant digesters across Boston Harbor, or the 19th-century Chestnut Hill Waterworks, the landmark industrial complex that originally contained huge, coal-powered steam engines and that will make fine high-end condos in the near future. Must we sanitize and romanticize public works functions in order to embrace and accept them?

To the naysayers and the doubters, I say take another look! Drive or walk on Summer Street from South Boston into Boston. Confront Vent Building 5 in all its muscular power. This is one honest building, doing an honest day's work, its

This is one honest building, doing an honest day's work, its form revealing its function, showing Boston just how the Big Dig works, a thrilling architectural antidote to years of Palladian pollution, postmodern pretensions, and contemporary contextualism.

form revealing its function, showing Boston just how the Big Dig works, a thrilling architectural antidote to years of Palladian pollution, postmodern pretensions, and contemporary contextualism.

Observe how its angularity provides a perfect foil for the curvilinear roof of Rafael Viñoly's new convention center. See how these two modern buildings frame a new dialogue with the downtown. Compare its soaring profile with the high-rises of different times: the United Shoe Machinery Building, the Federal Reserve Bank, the Custom House tower. Consider that its newest neighbor is the 14-story Manulife headquarters, the city's first radically "green" glass office building and a technological marvel.



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There are seven new vent buildings in all, plus a new air-intake building near South Station, but they haven't generated the same negative attention as Building 5. Each stands in a more established location. Vent Building 1 more than holds its own next to the US Post Office on Fort Point Channel. (Vent Building 2 was eliminated during the planning process.) Both Vent Building 3 on Atlantic Avenue and Vent Building 4 near the Blackstone Block in Haymarket will be wrapped in brand-new offices, condominiums, and hotel rooms. Vent Building 6 looks as if it is right at home in Marine Industrial Park, as does as the award-winning Vent Building 7 (above), surrounded by cargo warehouses at Logan Airport. Similarly, Vent Building 8 was slipped between the snaking overhead highway and railroad tracks at North Station.

Vent Building 5 may not have the comfortable familiarity of the Victorian Chestnut Hill Waterworks complex, but it has a clear, engaging language of its own. Like all the vent buildings, it was located on a specific site because it has a specific job to do. Like all the vent buildings, it is big because it contains a series of huge fans, some 30 feet in diameter, several miles of duct work, and all the mechanical equipment needed to circulate huge volumes of air. Like all the vent buildings, its chimneys rise high because the exhaust must be dispersed at calibrated heights in the atmosphere. Like all the vent buildings, it is clad in metal panels and exposed concrete because they are durable materials that require little maintenance.

It is not as if Vent Building 5 is without a few deft gestures of its own. There is for example, the matter of color: the teal-green louvers, and the orange-and-buff striped brick facing. But the colors serve their own purpose and acknowledge the colors and materials of the surrounding wharf buildings. There is something very seaworthy in its machined, white-metal panels. Yet Vent Building 5 is neither defined by, nor deferential to, expectations that it be anything other than what it is.

Although Big Dig officials have tried to assuage criticisms of Vent Building 5, pointing out that landscaping will soften its edges and that other buildings will grow up around it and diminish its visual impact, I hope it continues to serve as irritant and inspiration to those who will plan, develop, and design new offices, hotels and condominiums on nearby streets and thoroughfares. Let's live up to Vent Building 5's challenges and create something crisp, real, original, and daring for this part of the new Boston.

Perhaps we should start with a public tour?

■■■

Otile McManus writes occasionally for *ArchitectureBoston*.

Editor's note:
The architects for Vent Building 5 were Wallace Floyd Design Group and CWA/MJA Joint Venture.

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Spirit Matters

by A. Vernon Woodworth AIA

Before architecture, before civilization, before even agriculture, humans recognized that there was spirit in nature all around them. The most succinct and encompassing definition of spirit is "animating force." It is not instinct, or emotion, or feeling, necessarily, although there is spirit in each of these. Spirit is a force that moves through us yet is somehow not of us, with a life and a will of its own. Because it is independent of human will, and because it is indispensable to the human enterprise, spirit has been a major preoccupation of all human civilizations.

Australian Aborigines lived without permanent structures, either physical or social, yet had a deep mythic connection to their environment by means of their belief system, called "the Dreamtime." These hunter/gatherers saw their deities and the creation myths of their cosmos in the natural features of their world. A hill or a river embodied both an event of crucial mythical importance and the enduring spiritual power of that event. As with animist religions elsewhere, the Aborigines lived in a reverential state of "participation mystique" with their world as a result of this belief system. The relationship to spirit was immediate and direct. This connection was maintained by means of rituals, including rock paintings and other symbolic activities. Aborigines saw these acts as restorative, renewing connection to the creative spiritual forces inherent in nature.

Stone Age cultures have left behind geometric enigmas in the form of stone circles, henges, menhirs and tumuli. Tremendous energy was expended upon these earthworks and monuments, with little apparent utilitarian benefit. What motivated generations of pre-literate humanity in engineering feats that rivaled the pyramids or Gothic cathedrals? Whether Stonehenge is a giant calendar or, as a more recent theory

suggests, the private parts of the Earth Mother herself, the most cogent answer is replenishment and renewal. An agricultural society relies upon the fertility of the land and seeks all means available to control and increase it. Spirit is the primordial fertilizer, and the monuments of the Stone Age, perhaps the very first constructions worthy to be called architecture, were intended to invoke, contain, and marshal this potent force.

The ambiguity of Stonehenge and similar monuments (is the energy invoked celestial or terrestrial?) suggests a transitional phase in our relationship to spirit. These sites invoke the procreative energy of the earth as the goddess of life, but suggest that the source of fertilization — of renewal and rebirth — is solar, in the form of the rising sun on the winter solstice. Greek architecture of the Iron Age may also have been transitional in this regard. While our post-classical consciousness projects celestial implications onto a temple on a hill, Vincent Scully insists that "all Greek sacred architecture explores and praises the character of a god or a group of gods in a specific place" and that "the land (to the Greeks) was not a picture but a true force which physically embodied the powers that ruled the world...."

In fact, the development of architecture parallels the evolution of civilization with its hierarchical social structure and differentiating consciousness, precisely as a conduit for maintaining access to that vital source of life, the spirit. Siegfried Giedion has observed that "both ziggurat and pyramid derive their existence from man's awakened urge toward the vertical as a symbol of contact with the deity, contact with the sky." The awakening of this urge coincided with the development of the first cities and a corresponding hierarchical social structure. In other words, as human society developed from an agricultural to an urban orientation, our sense of the source of spiritual energy simultaneously shifted from the earth to the heavens. While the landscapes of the Dreamtime, Stone Age Europe, and Iron Age Greece were alive with the life force, a student of later landscapes and settlements might imagine that spiritual energy was drained from nature as we became less intimately involved with the earth. Stonehenge and Greek architecture sought to relate to and focus the energy inherent in their immediate environs; ziggurats, pyramids, and ultimately cathedrals sought spirit in the heavens.

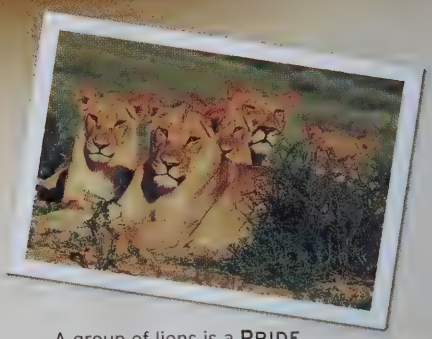
It is not well known that the Temple of Jerusalem, like Stonehenge, was oriented towards the rising sun on a specific day. The religious scholar Julian Morgenstern has described how the eastern gates were opened on New Year's day of the solar calendar to allow the first rays of the rising sun to enter deep into the temple. These doors remained closed for the rest of the year. The temple was, according to contemporary accounts, a condensed image of the cosmos, self-contained and ritually maintained. Connection with external sources of energy were reduced to this one significant occasion, when the divine spirit embodied in the sun's rays penetrated and renewed the sacred space.

Where do we find spirit in an age of secularism? Church doors still face east, and steeples point toward the heavens, but our connection with spirit is often tenuous at best. Despite our science and our humanism, we know that spirit is a powerful force. Fundamentalism, substance abuse, mental illness, not to mention the worship of material wealth and a culture of narcissism, can all be seen as aspects of spiritual dis-ease. Because civilization has apparently lost its ability to channel and contain spirit, individuals are left to contend with taming this powerful force on their own. But the spirit by definition is not a force that can be tamed. At best it can be invoked, channeled, directed, and expressed. When we lack the ability to connect to spirit in a creative fashion, its manifestation becomes negative and destructive. Senseless violence may well be the ultimate expression of frustrated spiritual energy gone awry without proper cultivation.

Our architecture has changed to reflect the values of civilization, yet its fundamental role as container for and expression of the life force remains. As our world views and consciousness continue to evolve, we will find new ways to employ architecture in the creative containment of spirit. The awakened awareness of earth energy, as demonstrated by Western fascination with the Eastern art of *feng-shui*, is a case in point. Earth energy, in the form of electromagnetic currents, is a measurable phenomenon, used by birds and other species to inform migratory movement. Investigators in Britain trace the location of churches, wells, and ancient tracks known as ley lines to the presence of electromagnetic currents in the earth which can be verified by means of the ancient art of dowsing. Perhaps the claims of *feng-shui* can be scientifically established, and architecture will once again be the principle conduit for channeling what the Chinese call *ch'i*. Although there is no English word that fully expresses the meaning of *ch'i*, "spirit" may be our closest equivalent.

Architecture, as a specific and highly specialized form of building, owes its origins and its continuing significance to its ability to express the power and awe of the spirit. The invocation, propitiation, and containment of spiritual energy through ritual and religion lies at the heart of the human enterprise. Even in today's secular age, architecture has not lost this original function. It is only architects who have sometimes forgotten the elemental power of building.

A. Vernon Woodworth AIA, an architect and consultant with the Sullivan Code Group, holds a Master of Theological Studies Degree from the Harvard Divinity School and is a graduate of the C. G. Jung Institute in Boston.



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Spirit Houses

Photographs by Steve Rosenthal

photo © Steve Rosenthal

York Street Baptist Church, 1891
York Village, Maine

In some parts of the world, people build or buy little house-like structures — the size of birdcages or dollhouses — that they place in auspicious locations to appease and please the spirits that can protect them. The construction of these "spirit houses" is an ancient practice rooted in animism, which continues despite the adoption of other religions.

Early New Englanders would have had no patience with such ideas. Instead, they built homely meetinghouses dedicated to the worship of a single, sometimes wrathful, God. Few of these structures remain today; in response to changing liturgies, evolving architectural tastes, and even competition from the growth of Anglicanism, the old Congregational meetinghouses were replaced by what is now perhaps the most enduring symbol of New England: the white wooden church. Constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries, these structures accommodated enormous variety in styles — Federalist, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Victorian — all expressed with simple architectural forms of great power. Perhaps unwittingly, New Englanders were also building spirit houses — places to shelter and nurture the spirit of their congregations, their communities, and their region.

It was this power that attracted the attention of renowned architectural photographer Steve Rosenthal. Throughout a career spent photographing some of the most significant contemporary architecture in New England, Rosenthal has taken time out to discover and document these regional icons. It is a sometimes discouraging quest: already some of his subjects have been debased by vinyl siding, insensitive additions, and development of surrounding sites. Indeed, a sense of loss hangs heavily over some of these images, while others reveal a vitality that will surely endure for centuries to come. Look closely at these images and you will discover that they capture more than the spirit of the places they document. They also capture the spirit of the gifted photographer who made them.

— *Elizabeth Padjen FAIA*

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1813
Newton Lower Falls
Newton, Massachusetts

First Congregational Church
Summer Sanctuary, 1834
Nantucket, Massachusetts

Stannard-Greensboro Bend
Methodist Church, 1888
Stannard, Vermont

photos on pages 38 and 39 © Steve Rosenthal

South Effingham
New Hampshire Church, 1891
South Effingham, New Hampshire

Rocky Hill Meetinghouse, 1785
Amesbury, Massachusetts
(a property of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities)

photos on pages 40 and 41 © Steve Rosenthal

Wonalancet Union Chapel (non-denominational)
1880 with modifications in 1896, 1936
Wonalancet, New Hampshire

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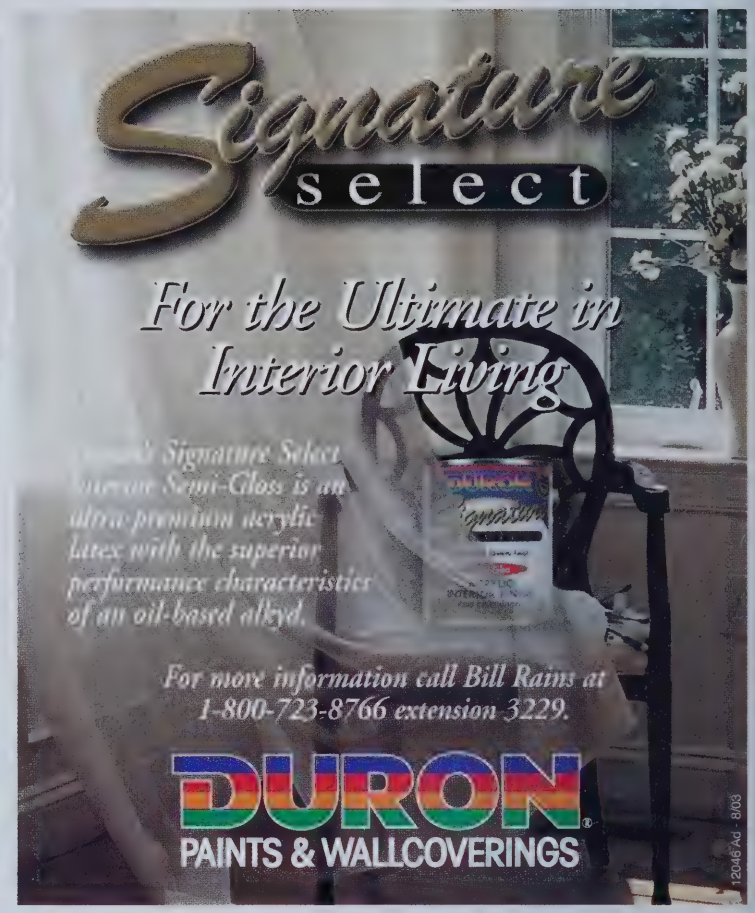

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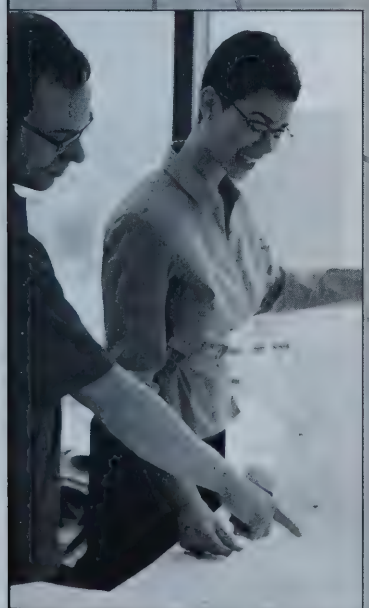

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My Town

by Joan Wickersham

There's a scene in the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* in which the Jimmy Stewart character staggers, bewildered, down a street which both is and isn't the main street of his hometown. Physically, the buildings are the same ones he's always known, the dull, safe, innocent banks and drugstores we've seen earlier in the movie. But this nightmarish, alternative-reality main street, with its tawdry flashing "Saloon" and "Girls–Girls–Girls" signs, is a vision of what his town might have been like if things had gone differently. What makes the scene horrifying is the sense of profound disorientation — here's the place you know best, it's right here; but it's absent, its soul is missing.

I have something of this uneasy, unreal feeling when I go back to the town where I grew up. It's an old mill town: Putnam, Connecticut. Nobody's ever heard of it. It isn't near Boston or Hartford or Providence; it isn't near anything; other, smaller towns are near it.

When I was a kid, Putnam was already struggling. The mills and factories lining its modest river were mostly closed. The town center — so small that instead of going "downtown" everyone spoke of going "downstreet" — was made up of tired old brick buildings and cracked concrete sidewalks. But it was a real town; you needed to go there to buy basic stuff. Our house was four miles away on the edge of the surrounding farm country, but pretty much every day we got in the car and went downstreet.

That Putnam, the one I remember from the 1970s, is imprinted on my memory as if it were the true, permanent Putnam. Bugbee's department store, with its creaky wooden floors — no matter which section of the store you were shopping in, old Mrs. Bugbee was always there watching you, with her white filigreed hairdo and her black-framed glasses on a chain around her neck. Next door, a dark store that dealt in paint, wallpaper, and funerals. Two fruit-and-vegetable stores: the one where we always shopped, and the one where we never did. The Johnny Unitas Quarterback Club, a hamburger place shaped like an enormous football. The old Belding thread mill: on hot summer nights, the three giant windows stacked above the center entrance were wide open, crammed with the spider-like silhouettes of workers on a break, their arms and legs spread wide to catch whatever breeze might be blowing through.

Of course I would have expected it to change in the 25 years since my family moved away: nobody's hometown stays the same forever. You go back as a grownup and are shocked to see that the dry cleaner has become a taco place, and one of the banks is now a martial-arts school.

But with Putnam, the change is more fundamental. Physically it is perfectly preserved. But its function is radically different. It has been transformed into a tourist attraction: a giant antiques mall.

All along the two main cross streets, the stores that used to sell clothes and shoes and wallpaper and wheelbarrows now sell nothing but antiques. The department store is an antiques shop. So is the paint store. So is the furniture store. So are the shoe store, the fabric store, the hardware store, and the jewelry store.

Pevner's drugstore, where I worked during school vacations, still has its old "Restaurant–Drugs" sign above the entrance. But inside, the aisles where I used to help customers find Ace bandages and Preparation-H are lined with glass cases full of $50 baseball cards and 30-year-old Pez dispensers.

It's doubly disorienting because I sold those same Pez dispensers from this same spot years ago on the nights when I worked the drugstore's front register. They were throwaway items back then; now they've resurrected themselves as objects worthy of reverence: collectibles. The mixing bowls, ashtrays, board games, and lunchboxes I grew up with are now offered as antiques. There's a weird feeling that I might discover something that actually did come out of my parents' basement — some artifact, long forgotten but instantly familiar, that will restore my lost childhood to me.

The story of Putnam is one that has been told over and over again in New England: the old mill town that has lost its reason to exist and finds a new way to survive. From a planning standpoint, Putnam's transformation is successful. No one has really been displaced, since chain stores on the outskirts were draining business from the center long before the antiques stores came along. The pedestrian character has been preserved; the vacancy rate is low; and the area is generating jobs and taxes. Preservationists, too, would find much to admire. The old buildings are in active use; and the streetscape — bald and implacable as it is — remains unaltered.

So why am I so fiercely possessive of the Putnam I remember? I have a fastidious, self-righteous disapproval of all these upstart businesses run by people from somewhere else to cater to people from somewhere else. But I'm an outsider, too. My family moved to Putnam when I was 11, because my father was going to be president of one of the factories and we were going to be rich. We moved away ten years later because he was forced out of his job and there weren't any other local companies looking for presidents. Ten years after that, when his latest business venture foundered and the bank called the loan, my father shot himself.

How can I possibly be objective? For me, this scrappy, tough, peeling town is a lost paradise. It is the place where things looked good for us and then turned bad. Leaving was the beginning of our disaster. We could never get back what we'd had there.

"Spirit of place" is a fashionable concept these days, but it's also a misleading one. Places don't have spirits; we do. Our own assumptions and associations — whether emotional or intellectual — can imbue places with meanings that seem to be universal. But in fact, when we speak about "spirit of place" we are, in some sense, always speaking about personal experience.

Today Putnam looks exactly as I remember it; nothing has been torn down, or spiffed up. It is intact and saved — but to me it seems utterly lost. No one shopping downstreet today would know enough to call it that. The buildings are like snail shells housing hermit crabs; the original creatures, for whom the shells were made, aren't there anymore. The original creatures have died, or gone to Wal-Mart.

But then, the *original* original creatures — the men who built the mills and the French-Canadian workers who came down to work in them — disappeared long ago. A town never really belongs to anyone; someone else was always there first. At the same time, the opposite is true: a town belongs to the people who live and work and shop there today. The antiques dealers have made a commitment to the town and its economy which has already outlasted my family's fickle decade there. I stand on the main street of this place from my past, which now survives by selling the past, and realize that of course the past I yearn for isn't here. The young sales clerks selling the pricey vintage Pez dispensers will have their own lives, their own stories. ■■■

Joan Wickersham lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is the author of *The Paper Anniversary* (Viking) and is finishing a new novel.

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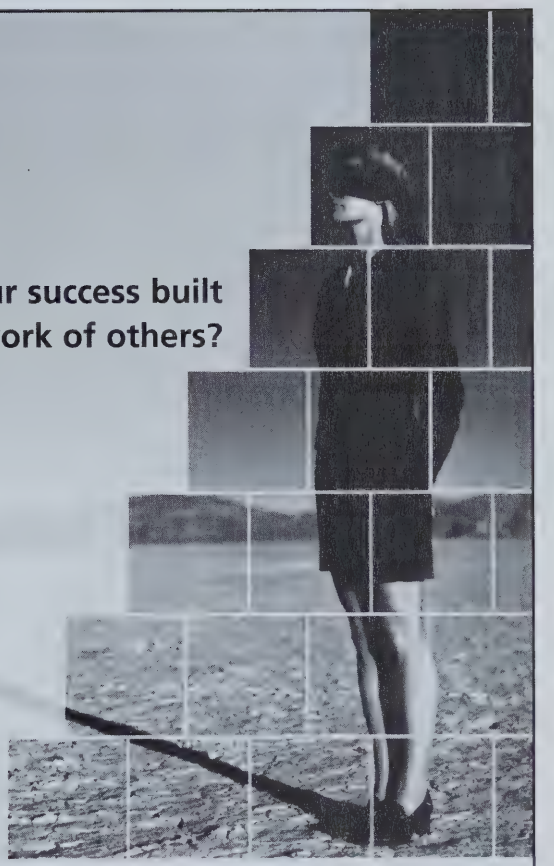

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A Voice in the Desert

Paolo Soleri talks with Jeff Stein AIA

In 1970, Italian architect Paolo Soleri (right) began a project that would become his life's work: the construction of Arcosanti, an experimental town in the desert north of Phoenix. At the beginning of the environmental movement, but still years before sustainability had entered our vocabulary, Arcosanti was planned as a community for 5,000 people embracing the idea that an urban environment could be created with minimal effect upon the earth. Now, 35 years later, Arcosanti is not yet complete, yet thousands of people visit annually and some stay to continue the work.

Jeff Stein AIA is the architecture critic for *Banker & Tradesman* and professor of architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology. He is a trustee of the Cosanti Foundation and spent eight years working on Arcosanti.

photo © Ken Howie

photo © Sue Anaya

JEFF STEIN: In 1970 you mounted an exhibition, *The Architectural Vision of Paolo Soleri*, at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington. A quarter of a million people showed up. That was the largest number of people ever to attend an exhibition in the history of the Corcoran, the largest number ever to attend an exhibition of architecture in the world, outside of a World's Fair.

PAOLO SOLERI: If you say so.

JEFF STEIN: Oh, it's true. What was it about that exhibition that so captured people's imaginations?

PAOLO SOLERI: It was a mix, I guess, of things that I was very engaged in at that time, a combination of architecture and craft, and looking toward a hopeful future for the city. And my book *Arcology: City in the Image of Man* had just been published.

JEFF STEIN: That book became a classic. I ordered it while I was a student. It came in the mail and I opened it up and it was five feet long, filled with giant drawings of three-dimensional cityscapes. At the bottom of the otherwise-blank first page it said, "This book is about miniaturization."

PAOLO SOLERI: That was my quote. I'm still with it, now more than ever.

JEFF STEIN: What do you mean by "miniaturization"?

PAOLO SOLERI: In vulgar terms, it is "doing more with less." In less vulgar terms, it means that what you might call "reality" has to become more productive. This ties very directly with the physical notions of distance, separation, noise, and inefficiency. My great example is the automobile, a big, non-miniaturized bundle of logistics that has a very negative impact on the city.

JEFF STEIN: And yet you live in Scottsdale, Arizona, a city that is among the most auto-dependent on earth.

PAOLO SOLERI: I grew up in Northern Italy and, after World War II and receiving a diploma in architecture, I came to study at Taliesin with Frank Lloyd Wright, who was in Scottsdale. Later, when my wife and I came back to America after building in Italy, we naturally settled in Scottsdale. There I was taken by this notion that the city is something not to abandon but something to cultivate, because that's where civilization comes from. So I began to stretch out ideas — drawings, models — that ended up being seen as blueprints for a city, which I never intended for them to be. They were just symbols that implied spatial arrangements that could be filled by culture and society.

JEFF STEIN: The Boston Society of Architects recently sponsored a conference on density. One of the sessions was called "Density: The New American Dream." You have written so much about this very issue; did you imagine that you would live long enough to see density become the new American dream?

PAOLO SOLERI: No. And it does not appear that "density" is a goal for contemporary Western civilization. I certainly don't think it's a concept with many followers in the United States.

JEFF STEIN: And yet you have always imagined in your work that density is an imperative.

PAOLO SOLERI: Yes. But I want to distinguish between "density" and "miniaturization." A chunk of iron is very dense but that has little to do with miniaturization. Miniaturization has to be connected with what's going on in that miniaturized container; and what's going on in a chunk of iron is not very much. Architects and designers often talk about container and content, a discussion that I reject because I don't believe in those kinds of theories. But if you take this notion of container and content, then miniaturization speaks about a minimal container that contains a maximum of life. If you want to have a highly complex system, and you understand the experience of organisms on the earth, then you must also aspire to great miniaturization.

JEFF STEIN: The fact is that all organisms — humans included — appear to be both miniaturized and quite complex. And the issue that you have pioneered, "arcology"— architecture and ecology — places this notion of organism together with urbanism.

Jeff Stein in the City of the Future

Fresh from graduate school in early 1975, I signed on to a six-week construction workshop at Arcosanti, Arizona, anxious to take my first trip to the American Southwest. Eight years later, I left Arcosanti for Boston. In between were some of the most rigorous, challenging, creative, joyful days of my existence.

The world's most beautiful construction site — Arcosanti — is perched on the edge of a mesa 70 miles north of Phoenix, in the high desert of central Arizona. For the hundred people who live there year 'round, it provides a kind of a "fishbowl" existence. The staff is constantly training amateurs to draw, dig, build, to accomplish the work itself, all surrounded by tourists every day. And when I was there, making models, stripping concrete forms, learning crane signals, welding window frames, we engaged in deep simultaneous discussions about the future of the city, about (back then) how to predict solar gain with punch cards, about people living near where they work, about budgeting time to wade into the sewage treatment oxidation pond to harvest water hyacinths, experiencing through the work how everything connects to everything.

Work was often interrupted by visitors: presidential candidates and politicians looking for the future and for great scenery. I met Betty Friedan there. Jerry Brown came to spend the week and left with ideas that later formed the core of the California Urban Initiative. Performing-arts events at the construction site provided a home away from home for Jackson Browne, other musicians, performers, and thinkers. Paul Earls and Otto Piene came out from the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies. And architects arrived: I first met Philip Johnson at Arcosanti. He, like me, like thousands of people since then, was drawn to the work and optimistic personality of its originator, Paolo Soleri.

photo © Junzo Okada

After a while the extraordinary became the norm. A television crew from Japan would show up, or a group of BBC journalists on a tour of the US. They'd always begin, "We are here in the desert where a small group of people are reinventing the city." We did think we were doing that, in our heart of hearts. Yet the whole idea was so far-fetched that we seldom uttered it. We wouldn't take ourselves that seriously. Instead we awoke every morning to the sound of windbells, a morning construction meeting, hearty meals right out of Arcosanti's extensive organic gardens. And of course there was the design and construction work itself, every day, something we did take seriously. It was a balanced and complex life, urbane and frugal in the extreme.

At an Arcosanti conference in 1981, Peter Blake sat with me on the edge of a cliff overlooking the curving forms of the construction site in the near distance. "You're ready to move to Boston," he suggested. Bostonian Ron Gourley was seated next to him. By then the dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Arizona and a frequent visitor to Arcosanti, Gourley concurred. A year later I was living in Cambridge. But I brought Arcosanti with me. As in one of Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities, I only need glance at the night sky. "There is the blueprint," it says.

— Jeff Stein AIA

PAOLO SOLERI: I hope so. Keep in mind though that an organism without transcendence into self-knowledge or self-awareness exists on a level that cannot comprehend the urban system. The beehive, a condition that is so often cited by critics as an example of density, doesn't reflect the dimension of culture, the dimension of intellect, that we are the bearers of. A beehive now is identical to a beehive of a million years ago, and that doesn't work at all with the idea of a city because a city, besides being a structure and a social system, is a cultural system. That makes a gigantic difference.

JEFF STEIN: I'm thinking that your notion of transcendence, self-knowledge that comes about from being a part of a miniaturized and complex urban container, is what spirit is.

PAOLO SOLERI: The city, at least, is the kind of environmental situation where complexity that leads to transcendence can really flourish. And accepting the fact that we are going from the tribal to the metropolitan, there is an enormous gap of knowledge, of intensity, of joy and suffering between these two states of being. These conditions — tribal and urban — are almost not comparable, which should make so-called environmentalists pause now and then. Those who explain that "a return to nature" is called for at this juncture in our evolution expose themselves as people who don't really know what they are talking about.

JEFF STEIN: Around 1970 you began to construct an experimental new town, Arcosanti, 70 miles north of Phoenix. How did you imagine that would be a good idea? I know, for instance, that Charles Eames, the industrial and graphic designer and filmmaker, tried to warn you about doing such a foolish thing.

PAOLO SOLERI: I remember Charles being at Arcosanti at the beginning, filming me making models for two or three days.

JEFF STEIN: According to his writing, Eames suggested that this would be a hugely difficult undertaking, creating a model city in the central Arizona desert, and that funding would be hard to find. And it was so outside the mainstream of materialist American culture that it had almost no chance at all of success.

PAOLO SOLERI: And he was damn right! But for Charles the mistake was — and I corrected him — that I have not attempted with Arcosanti to make a model city. I'm trying to set up a laboratory. So that really takes me out of the Utopian stream, an idealized movement that is so stupid to me. Isolating the problems, going down to a minimal demand — and a minimal hope, in a way — but trying all the while to stick to some of the very basic rules of reality — that's what we are doing now.

JEFF STEIN: The theologian John Cobb wrote this about you in the early 1980s: "Few of us realize that much of the problem of our civilization is caused by the way our cities are built, but hardly anyone proposes serious alternatives. The one great exception is Paolo Soleri." Theology is a critical field for you and for anyone who wants to understand your work. There are people who imagine that your work is the embodiment of the ideas of the French Jesuit philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin earlier in the century. But Chardin's model of reality, as you point out in some of your writing, was revelational, in which reality is revealed by some divine presence. Your model is creational.

PAOLO SOLERI: By that I simply mean that reality doesn't start with something divine or superior, or a graceful something that might be called spirit, or even God. Reality starts instead with a brute, mindless, meaningless, raging violence: the Big Bang. From there it is a process — I call it "becoming" — of reality transforming itself. This transformation goes on and on. Within mindless and meaningless reality is the beginning of something we call "life" and life is where our willfulness appears. And from there on, we go from bacteria to the great people who appear throughout life. And we are all great people. Keep in mind we are miracles. Miracles upon miracles.

JEFF STEIN: And the city is one of those miracles?

PAOLO SOLERI: It's a coming together of those miracles that otherwise tend to be self-isolating, though very gregarious. But in the American ethos we say, "No, I want to express myself fully, so I'm going to be a person with my own intent, my own pleasure, my own desires, and don't bug me." That's the end of civilization, I think.

JEFF STEIN: When you think about the city in terms of "arcology," architecture and ecology, are you suggesting it requires a certain form?

PAOLO SOLERI: First I would say that containment is essential. That's why Los Angeles is so difficult to handle, impossible even. Because like an organism, a city needs boundaries. Why should architecture be invasive of the land? Why should the land say, "No, you can't build cities, because that's against my nature" — as is the case now? We have formed mistaken and unnecessary boundaries around land and cities. But cities need containment, even if this means some kind of legal statement that says, "One more person is not possible in this phenomenon; let's build a new city; let's build a baby so to speak. Let's build another feature that will take care of the demographic pressure."

JEFF STEIN: Of course that is exactly what happens to other organisms.

PAOLO SOLERI: But cities are not yet clearly understood by most people to be organisms. Currently, they grow to be giants and then super giants. But they could make babies. Why not make babies?

JEFF STEIN: This takes the idea of organic architecture to a really fundamental level. When people visit Arcosanti, and around 50,000 do each year, they often come away exclaiming at the extraordinary sense of place there, how you and those around you have captured the spirit of the place. What are they talking about, in your terms?

PAOLO SOLERI: Well, we hope that they sense how we have been imaginative in generating spaces and so on. But mainly it is this notion of containment, the fact of doing more with less. The proposition is that something is going on at Arcosanti that could be very, very important for our society.

JEFF STEIN: But what you are proposing is in conflict with the current American dream, a sprawling, big, individualistic, materialistic condition in which the most materials possible are produced and consumed.

PAOLO SOLERI: If there is an ideal machine that caters to production and consumption, it is the exurban situation. That is where the most consumptive society is going to develop itself.

JEFF STEIN: The only question is, how long can it continue?

PAOLO SOLERI: Since humans are very smart, we can create all sorts of devices that can carry on this process. One way is to ignore the fact that half of humanity is far from that dream and a quarter of humanity is almost in a state of dereliction.

JEFF STEIN: And so there is an issue, not only about the general reverence for life that organizing a city in an organic fashion brings to the foreground, but also about a kind of equity.

PAOLO SOLERI: Yes. One of my core principles has to do with equity. "Equity" and "aesthetic" cannot be separated ultimately. Just as I don't think that we can distinguish between the ethical and the aesthetic. Take, for instance, the "creation" in Christianity. We keep preaching to ourselves that this has to do with the garden of Eden and benevolence and so on. The fact is, it connects very much with the aesthetic that Christianity has developed, and the greatness of some of the Christian painters, sculptors, architects, poets. So in a way, in Christianity, the aesthetic is not a function of the Church; the Church is a function of the aesthetic.

JEFF STEIN: How does Arcosanti work as an urban laboratory? There are still people who go there to live and work and there are buildings being constructed.

PAOLO SOLERI: It works very minimally, and the main reason is that we don't have many resources. It's a building site that, instead of going 100 miles an hour, goes two miles an hour. It is difficult for anyone there to keep in mind that maybe they're working on something that has important things to say. But we have people, we are going on, and we remember that we are a tiny fragment of anything that could be called a city. Moving in an open space where vested interests were very minimal, and then having a certain impression of young people coming and helping us, made me think that that was a moment to use, to try to develop this laboratory. So it's a little village, a fragment of a little village, but it has something to point at now. And we're still at it 35 years later. ■■■

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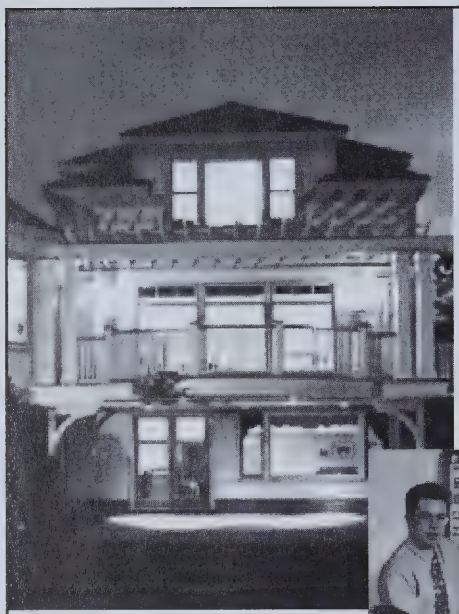

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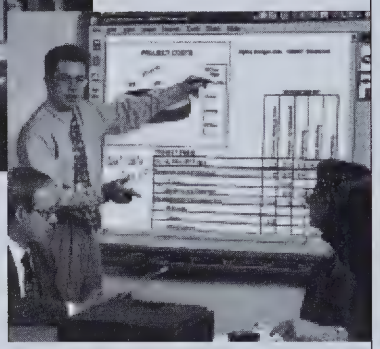

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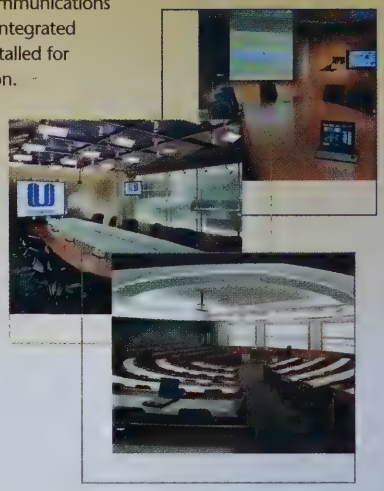

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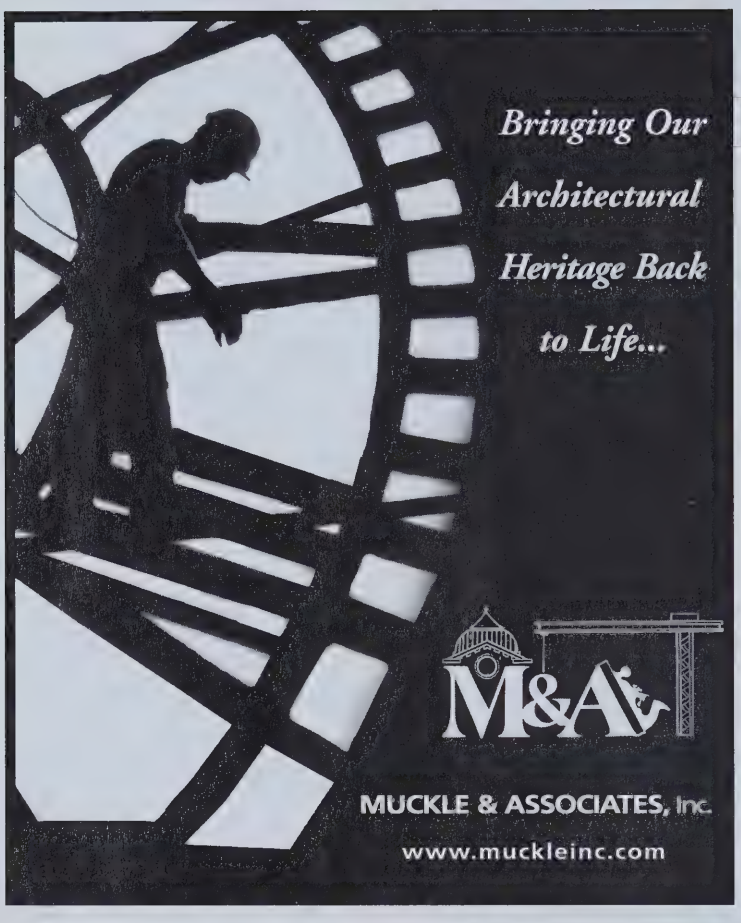

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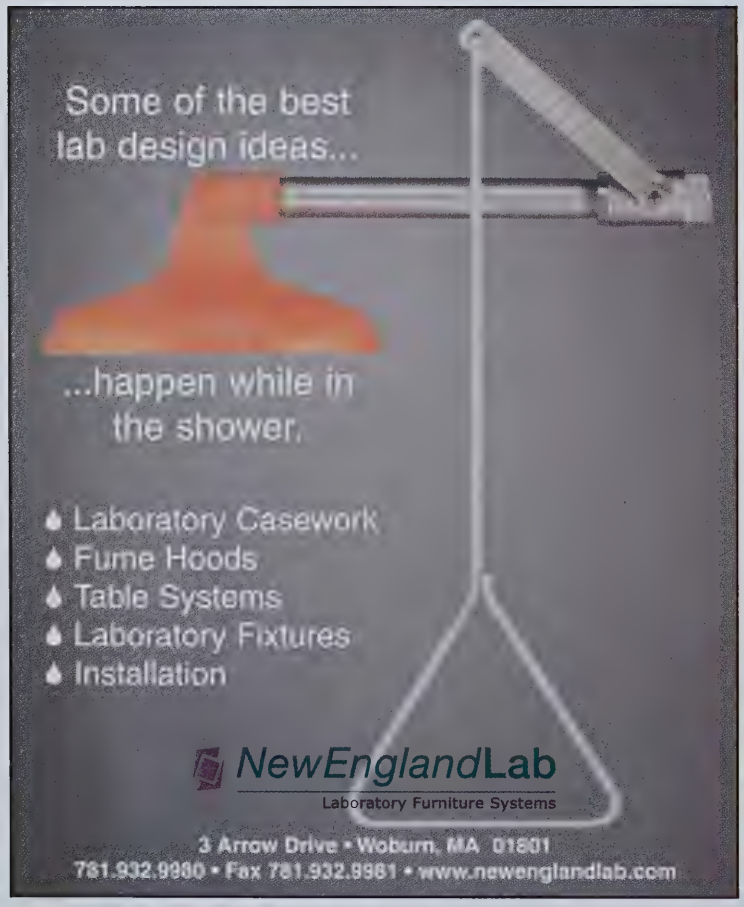

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Covering the Issues

Periodical roundup

by Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA

Want to redesign the world?... Read about those who have in "Builders of Dreams," *U.S. News & World Report*'s special issue on "the stones, steel, and heavenly spires [that] have touched the lives of millions" (June 30/July 7, 2003). One part *Cliffs Notes*, one part architectural history, one part cultural studies lesson, this series of sound bites presents surprisingly thorough, balanced tales of how and why large design projects have transformed the Western (mostly American) world. Expected "great list" examples like the interstate highway system, the Brooklyn Bridge, and Olmsted are interspersed with less-heard tales of people and places like the 17th-century landfill project to wrestle a northern harbor's marshy settlement into a city. Think Boston? Think again — it's Peter the Great, and the city that again bears his name.

GPS is cool... From 11,000 miles above the earth, 28 satellites track the moves of Global Positioning System chips around the globe. Embedded in everything from hand-held FedEx signature machines to tractors to personal cell phones, GPS tracks the movement of people and product to an accuracy of one foot. Laptops, even toddlers, can be tagged so they are never lost. Over the past decade, it has quietly become indispensable to most industries. "Will yours be next?" asks Charles Fishman in *Fast Company* in "The Sky's the Limit" (July 2003). The possibilities of this extraordinary accuracy are still emerging.

Another new new thing... Apparently *Architecture*'s not the only magazine suffering an awkward redesign. *Wallpaper**'s infamous asterisk finally received a reason to exist, heralding the magazine's *new look (June 2003). It was better when the asterisk was unemployed. Although sometimes obnoxious, the sharp writing, dense content, excellent design sense, and over-the-top innuendos (that made any Austin Powers fan proud) once defined an original, intelligent high end for the glossy shelter mags. Now redesigned, *Wallpaper** promises instead to be "elegant and accessible, sophisticated and sexy." Unfortunately, the pages prove otherwise; bodies are bared while substantive design content is lost. Alas, watered-down wallpaper is exactly that: soggy.

Galaxy of stars... With Arnold on *Newsweek* (August 18, 2003) and Prince William on *Vanity Fair* (September 2003), who else could be inside both but Frank Gehry? In "A Mighty Monument to Music" and "Roll Over Bilbao," Cathleen McGuigan and Matt Tyrnauer respectively argue that the Guggenheim was but a test drive. Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall for the Los Angeles Philharmonic will be his true masterwork. These celebratory, comprehensive articles each detail 8the hall's extended political and financial saga while outlining its author's career in terms generally reserved for a favorite uncle. Ultimately they also unwittingly provide yet more evidence of the narrowness of our architectural celebrity stratosphere.

Vital signs... "What does it mean, today, to be vital?" asks David Haskell, editor of *Topic* magazine's issue three on "The Vital City." Edited in Cambridge (theirs) and New York, *Topic* is a new quarterly nonfiction journal featuring changing, um, topics. Contributors include active participants in their respective fields, well-established names interspersed with a few fresh ones. A sample from this "city" issue: Alexander Garvin comments on the legacy of Robert Moses. Bill Mitchell predicts the effect of cyberspace on real space. Photographer Jose Picayo and painter Tom Slaughter show their work side-by-side from Havana and New York. Saskia Sassen asks, "Who belongs in the global city?" Ben Hurwitz presents LA through the twenty-something eyes of a wanna-be screenwriter. John Scanlon talks trash. The vibrant variety of voices within these pages suggests the possibilities implied by the editor's opening: "Should Disney World close tomorrow, the universe would be a few Plutos fewer and so much the wiser."

Here we go again... They tore down an urban neighborhood in order to save it. They held an international competition and built the dullest design. They wonder why the buildings are full, but the plaza is always empty. Sound familiar? Egos, intrigue, and ill-fated plans are all here, too, in Paul Goldberger's in-depth account of New York's ongoing Lincoln Center renovation. In "West Side Fixer-Upper" (*The New Yorker*, July 7, 2003), Goldberger discusses former proposals and the new design team, suggesting that Diller + Scofidio's accessible presentations and ground-level tinkering will now save the day. Maybe when they're finished, they could take a look at Boston's City Hall Plaza. ■■■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, teaches the architecture studios at Smith College and maintains a practice in Boston.

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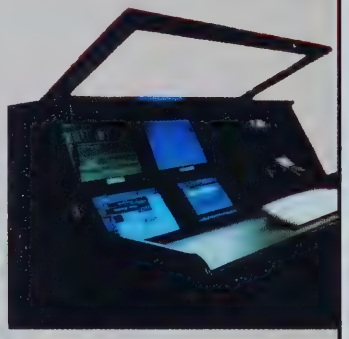

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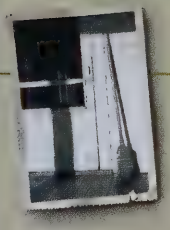

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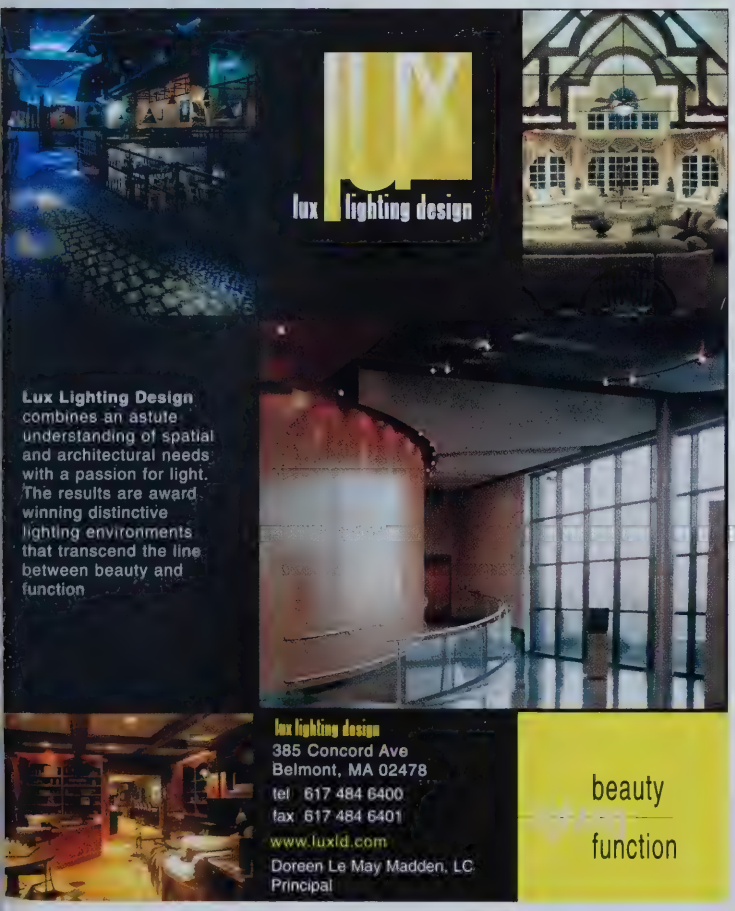

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Books

Spirit and Place

by Christopher Day
Architectural Press, 2002

Reviewed
by Andrew St. John AIA

Progressive human culture looks for the causes of human behavior, seeking to improve society and the world around us. By contrast, the world of commerce is essentially reductionist. Costs that aren't easily calculated for the quarterly bottom line, like aesthetics or community betterment, tend to be excised from traditional corporate programs.

To survive in the commercial world, many people separate their progressive instincts from their commercial selves. Christopher Day seeks to overcome this duality, to bring human values into the world of work and, in the case of design, to have the built environment reinforce rather than erode positive social values.

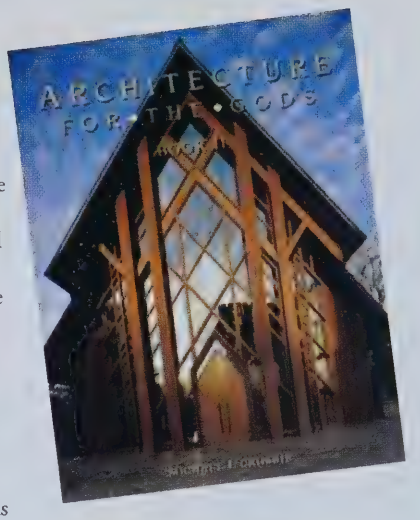
This book is both inspiring and frustrating. It's inspiring because Day — a Welsh architect and writer who has built his career around sustainability — has it so right: "We have traded privations and truth for stress and appearance." "The antithesis of nature is not humanity, industry, pollution. It is thought." "For stress relief, [we turn] toward the natural; for intellectual challenge, toward the urban." He has a comprehensive grasp of how things go together and where they come from. And he has a healthy skepticism about the value of technology in solving design problems.

His design ideas for addressing contemporary social problems flow like water, demonstrating, for example, that design can facilitate community interaction. He wants us to design with care — about the place, about the people who are to use our designs, about the community in which they exist. He addresses the full range of design, from building health to traffic control, using a participatory design process — *with* rather than *for* people, seeking "consensus based on underlying values."

The frustration arrives because Day tries to do too much. He wants nothing less than to lead us through an exploration of human consciousness and experience, couched in terms of design, to arrive at a new world-view, one which values people, community, and spirit over material accomplishment. He has a hard time categorizing his own excellent ideas in a structure recognizable to design professionals. Be prepared to sift analysis, strategy, and example from almost every paragraph. A book like this begs the question of whether healthy design is possible in a society so skewed toward the material. One wonders whether this kind of creative energy might be better spent in more direct social work.

In the end, there is nothing wrong with a cosmic approach to design, and a great deal of contemporary work would profit immensely from Day's wider perspective: "It is the values imprinted by how buildings are used (and financed, designed, constructed and maintained) that imparts spirit." Too much design energy is invested in projects whose sole motive is profit. We need more Christopher Days, committed to making the world a better place.

Andrew St. John AIA manages development projects for nonprofit and commercial clients.



Architecture for the Gods: Book II

by Michael J. Crosbie
Images Publishing, 2002

Reviewed
by William Morgan

What is it about books on contemporary church architecture that renders the subject insipid, sterile, and devoid of soul? Maybe it is the photography? Typical of the genre are the images in *Architecture for the Gods*: what may be exciting spaces seem homogenized by assiduous perspective correction, perfect lighting, and polarized skies. The result is like a freshly varnished coffin.

Ecclesiastical architecture, however ancient its traditions, is still challenging, especially in a nation so obsessed with religion. Both architects and clergymen need stronger publications on church design. As John Wesley Cook of the Luce Foundation notes in the introduction, "The clergy are not prepared to take seriously the language of architecture for the church's mission."

Michael Crosbie, the editor of *Faith & Form* magazine and author of the 1999 prequel to this volume, generally does much to foster the discussion of spiritual architecture. Nevertheless, this book appears to be an anthology underwritten by the featured architects. The text reads like a press release to accompany the crowd-pleaser photos. The Church of Conscious Harmony is, for example, "built to human scale with honest materials, is well suited to the land upon which it sits and to the practice of the faith of this congregation."

Following demographic trends, the Southwest is home to lots of new churches. Equally unsurprising, Episcopalians and Lutherans remain more consistently interested in aesthetics. A handful of the dozen Catholic churches shown are almost all right, while some of the nine synagogues — Lake/Flato's Agudas Achim in Austin and Kliment & Halsband's Center for Jewish Life at Dartmouth — are stunning.

The pretentiously titled *Architecture for the Gods* shows that churches are getting bigger, which rarely is better, unless you commission Cram, Wren, or the Master of Chartres. Mega-churches designed to hold evangelical congregations the size of small cities rarely offer much of a sense of the unknown. Riverbend in Austin is a rendition of the theater at Epidauros, complete with mountains beyond the stage. The spectacular view, however, is partially blocked during services by a giant video screen.

There are some intriguing churches: the chapel at Sewanee, Tennessee (designed by the successors to Fay Jones' firm); the church at Seaside, Florida; and St. Peter's by the Sea in Gulfport, Mississippi. The most inspirational house of worship is the least institutional: Live Oak Friends in Houston. Leslie Elkins constructed this small frame building around James Turrell's "Skyspace," a 12-foot-square opening in the roof. Simplest of all the buildings in *Architecture for the Gods*, it is cosmic, poetic, and powerful.

A volume like this can be a polemic for better church design — the kind of visual aid architects pass around church building committees in hopes of raising aspirations. Yet the best religious architecture deals with mystery, and many of the churches in *Architecture of the Gods* would have been better served by less "architectural" photography.

William Morgan is an architecture critic based in Providence, Rhode Island. He is the author of *Country Churches*, which will be published in spring 2004 by Abrams.

Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century

by John F. Sears

University of Massachusetts Press, 1998 (paper)

Reviewed by Phyllis Andersen

"Traveling is the most exquisite mode of killing time and spending money ever devised by lazy ingenuity." This wasn't written by a 21st-century tourist, but by an early 19th-century American travel-writer. John F. Sears, the historian and director of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute in Hyde Park, New York, deploys similarly entertaining quotations and rich source material in this elegant history of the origins of tourism in the United States.

Empowered by a degree of affluence, worldly education, and the desire for adventure conducted in reasonable safety and comfort — not to mention the felicitous arrival of the railroad, steamboat, and turnpike — genteel travelers of the early 19th-century were drawn to recreational touring, which at times combined the grand tour with pilgrimage and religious retreat. With only a passing glance at well-trodden paths to European monuments of high culture, American tourists sought both transcendental experience and a cultural context for their own national identity.

Before Darwin, geology was thought to be the science most likely to unlock the secrets of the universe. Exhilaration, adventure, and what Samuel Johnson had called "terror without danger" made Niagara Falls a prime tourist destination. Having no equal in Europe, the Falls promised an intense emotional and religious experience, but soon an outrageous assemblage of distractions — trinket sellers, fast-talking guides, sideshows — preempted the sublimity of the Falls. By the 1830s, the experience of Niagara had already become a cliché.

Sears illuminates the power of geological formation to intensify emotion in his unique comparison of the traveler's experience of Yosemite with that of Yellowstone. Yosemite represented the height of sublime grandeur, while Yellowstone was a study in weirdness: boiling sulfur springs, geysers, hot cauldrons of mud.

The power of God was also seen in sites of denser human habitation. Sears includes a chapter on prisons, asylums, cemeteries, and parks. The creation of new urban infrastructure in the early 19th century moved these institutions to the green edges of cities, where they attracted both American and European visitors in awe of the technology and the uplifting quality of the facilities. Sears describes the garden cemetery as an extension of domestic tranquility, banishing the gloom and crowded conditions of the urban churchyard. "The dead," he notes "were the first people to move to the suburbs."

Originally published in 1989, this book was among the first in a growing body of tourism literature. In a rare example of scholarly generosity, Sears offers a preface to this paperback edition that examines the professional growth of his field and adds an annotated list of literature that has appeared since his first edition — literature that expands on several aspects of his discourse. His book continues to offer critical background for the history of America preservation, conservation, and national character.

Phyllis Andersen is Fellow for Cultural Landscape Studies of the Landscape Institute of the Arnold Arboretum in Boston and is a member of the *ArchitectureBoston* editorial board.

The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things

by Barry Glassner

Basic Books, 1999

Reviewed by Virginia Quinn

Were you one of the many Americans heading fearfully to their local hardware store after the Department of Homeland Security raised its terrorism threat level from yellow to orange and proposed duct tape and plastic sheeting as useful remedies during a chemical or biological attack?

The "gift of fear," according to Gavin de Becker in his popular book of the same name, can be a survival signal that tells you something is wrong and, if heeded, gives you an opportunity to avert danger. But what about unwarranted fear, the kind that flies in the face of facts and logic?

In *The Culture of Fear*, Barry Glassner, professor of sociology at the University of Southern California, examines why Americans have become so fearful lately, and why our fears are so often misplaced. In nine easy chapters (plus copious endnotes), he examines the "wrong things" that we worry about out of all proportion: road rage; killer adolescents; dubious illnesses; and plane crashes, to name a few.

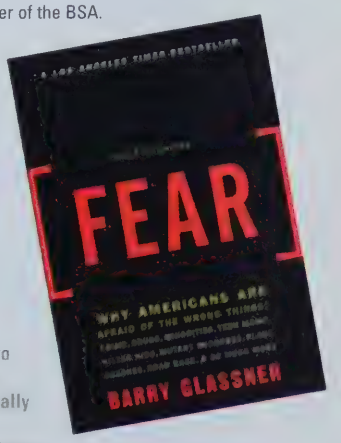
Although at the time this book was published (1999), many scholars and journalists were attributing this increase in fearfulness to pre-millennial tensions, Glassner focuses his discussion on the role the news media play in inflaming unfounded fears. Respected publications are every bit as likely as pulpy tabloids to indulge in this practice in pursuit of readers — a scan of the index finds multiple citations for *The New York Times* and *Newsweek* magazine, for example, but not a single one for the *National Enquirer* or the *Weekly World News*.

Glassner frequently credits the misinterpretation of statistics as the reason the media can get away with the frenzy. By using percentages instead of actual numbers, representing incidences as rates, and reporting statistics out of context, grim reporters spin a web of plausible-sounding arguments that trigger a visceral terror in the hearts of news consumers too weary to question the math.

Glassner argues that allowing our attention to be engaged by these pseudo-dangers enables us to avoid real problems we do not want to confront (overcrowded roads, gun control), as well as those we have grown tired of confronting (poverty, affordable health care). The "right things" to be afraid of are the big-picture issues that are in fact the basis for all the more titillating scares, but that are hard to fix and harder still to distill into sound bites.

But keep in mind that *The Culture of Fear* joins a long procession of bestsellers devoted to the subject, going back as far as the 1841 *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of the Crowds*, a compilation of obsessions (tulipmania, mesmerism, the crusades) that have whipped large populations into a frenzy all throughout history. Is there something fundamental in the human spirit that propels us to jettison logic and embrace fear's thrill?

Virginia Quinn, CPSM, is an A/E marketing consultant based in Belmont, Massachusetts. The former marketing director of Goody, Clancy & Associates, she has also served as a director of the Society for Marketing Professional Services, Boston Chapter. She is a Professional Affiliate member of the BSA.



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National Coalition to Save Our Mall

www.savethemall.org

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Other Voices by Lexi Rudnitsky

Lower East Side Tenement Museum

photo © Steve Brosnahan

When I was a girl growing up in the suburbs of Boston, my father would regularly take us to his old neighborhood in Philadelphia. His parents, Russian-Jewish immigrants who had fled the pogroms, lived above their tailor-supply shop in an L-shaped apartment that spanned 11 feet at its widest. It was always with a sense of longing that I listened to my father's stories about his childhood: throwing pebbles at his best friend's bedroom window to call him to play baseball, sneaking out of the crowded *shul* while services droned on, jumping on the back of trucks until — tragically — he witnessed his friend's leg crushed underneath. This was the world I wanted, not the antiseptic environment in which I grew up, where diversity meant busing in black kids from Roxbury, where to be a Jew meant having an extravagant Bar Mitzvah, where every activity required premeditation and carpools.

With a similar air of nostalgia, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum recreates the lives of various immigrant families who inhabited the building on 97 Orchard Street between its 1863 construction and 1935, when all but one of its families were evicted because it failed to comply with the housing reforms implemented by Mayor LaGuardia, himself a refugee of tenement housing. In 1900, the block on which it is located — between Broome and Delancey — was the most densely populated place on earth, housing over 2,200 people, almost all of them recent immigrants. Businesses continued to operate out of the ground floor between 1935 and 1990, but the upper floors were largely abandoned, and therefore something of a time capsule, until the museum was established in 1988. The hallways — now dimly lit to evoke the period before central lighting was mandated in 1901 — maintain many turn-of-the-century details: elaborately patterned ceilings of steel and iron alloy, dark, leathery wallpaper made of burlap soaked in linseed oil, and the white mosaic floors with specks of blue and maroon common to many prewar New York City buildings. In the various apartments, restorers uncovered an average of 20 layers of wallpaper, imprints of the many families who passed through and briefly made 97 Orchard Street their home.

The museum is only accessible by tour, perhaps because the building itself does not seem exceptional, especially to someone who has seen a fair amount of New York real estate. Rather than feeling scandalized over the squalid living conditions to which immigrants were subjected, I found myself calculating how much the 325 square-foot three-room apartments with hardwood floors would rent for today: up to $2,000 a month. Except for the bathroom down the hall, it looked very much like the apartments in which many of my upper-middle-class friends live just a few blocks away, albeit without large families.

Indeed, the spirit of the museum is not in the familiar architecture, but in the lives of the people who lived at 97 Orchard Street — most passing through, some residing there for decades. There is the story of Nathalie Gumpertz, whose husband did not return from work one day during the Depression of 1873-74. He evidently responded to financial strain by leaving his family, something that was typical at the time: local newspapers printed long lists containing the names of men who had abandoned their wives. Mrs. Gumpertz never found her husband, but by sewing intricate Victorian dresses she managed to support her four small children, one of whom died soon after her husband's disappearance. In a terrible coda to that tale of survival, we learn that her great-great-great grandson was killed not far away on September 11.

The memories of Josephine Baldizzi, daughter of a cabinetmaker and factory worker from Sicily, pervade the apartment across the hall. She moved into 97 Orchard Street during the Great Depression with her parents and brother, who was later hit by a car and suffered serious leg injuries. Hearing her recount (via recording) how her mother rose at 5:00 a.m. to haggle with street peddlers, or how she turned on the lights for her Jewish neighbors every Shabbat, powerfully conjures the vibrant and close community of the Lower East Side.

As a group of tourists gathered outside the museum, listening to stories of how the immigrants on the Lower East Side once lived, a middle-aged Chinese man pushed his way through the crowd, balancing a heavy load of boxes and sweating in the summer heat. Had they followed him a few blocks south into the heart of Chinatown, they might have seen for themselves — among the stalls of exotic Asian vegetables, caged chickens, and piles of dried eels — the latest episode in the history of the Lower East Side. ■■■

Lexi Rudnitsky is the associate director of the undergraduate writing program at Columbia University.

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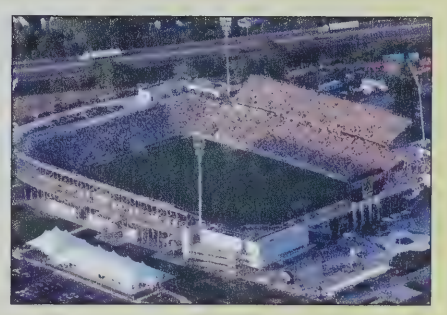

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